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MISCELLANIES

CONSISTING OF

I. LETTERS TO DR. CHANNING ON THE TRINITY.
II. TWO SERMONS ON THE ATONEMENT.
III. SACRAMENTAL SERMON ON THE LAMB OF GOD.
IV. DEDICATION SERMON—REAL CHRISTIANITY.
V. LETTER TO DR. CHANNING ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.
VI. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES AND POSTSCRIPTS

OF NEW ADDITIONAL MATTER.

BY M. STUART,

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PREFACE.

THE present volume of *Miscellanies* owes its publication to the frequent calls made upon me to publish it. Those parts of it, (all but one Sermon), which had before been printed, were out of print, and were often called for at some of the book-stores which have particular connection with works published in this place. To print in an ephemeral pamphlet form, I deemed unadvisable; as did also my friends; and hence the *collection* in the present volume of several discourses and letters, written at different times, and called forth originally by some special exigency. The sentiments expressed in these various compositions I still retain, after a somewhat protracted period of investigation, study, and experience. I wish to bequeath them to all who interest themselves in anything which I write, as my legacy. I cherish a desire to give my latest testimony in respect to the views which I have continued to entertain, concerning the all-important topics of which these compositions treat.

Unity is of course out of question, in a book of professed MISCELLANIES. Yet there is, after all, one point of unity, or one bond of connection, which links the whole together. The topics are such as constitute the very essence of the great questions, about which a struggle so long and arduous has arisen and been going on, in this quarter of our country. They are, moreover, *vital* themes of Christianity,

which must have an interest at all times and in all places. No other apology is needed, for entering into a discussion of them, or for publishing the results of that discussion, in case peculiar circumstances render it desirable.

I doubted, at first, whether I should divest the various compositions, included in the present volume, of all their *local* and *temporary* costume, and give them the dress of simple and absolute discussion. My deliberations on this subject ended in the conviction, that what is *local* and *temporary* will rather serve to give interest to the discussion. In fact, it constitutes so small a part of the whole, that I did not think the remodelling of the pieces in order to leave it out, was either necessary or expedient.

Some *parachronisms* the observing reader may easily detect; e. g. I have in a few instances interwoven with what was originally addressed to Dr. Channing, facts or events which have happened *since* that period. It is an offence, perhaps, against the rules of strict rhetorical propriety. But it was easier, or at any rate more agreeable to my feelings, to say what I wished to say, in this way, than to load the text with cumbrous notes. The reader need not put it to the account of oversight. Any formal vindication of doing what I have done in this respect, would be a waste of time and words to little or no purpose.

The Supplementary Note to Letter I., and all the Postscripts excepting that to Letter III., have been written for the present edition; and are *additions* to the former publications, which have cost me more labour than the original compositions. Of their *value* and *importance*, it belongs to readers to judge.

In respect to the several Sermons, and the Letter on Religious Liberty, it is not necessary to say more, in this place,

than that the particulars which I wish the reader to know, are elsewhere given, being inserted at the head of each of these compositions. I need not here repeat what is there said.

If my testimony and my arguments in regard to the topics discussed, should be of any avail in calling the attention of intelligent Christians and citizens of this Commonwealth, or elsewhere, to the all-important subjects of which they treat, this publication will not be useless. Should they be listened to in this vicinity, or in a still wider extent, and Christians be roused up to a due consideration of the matters in question, or be satisfied with the defence I have made of the sentiments which I have avowed, it will be an ample and the best reward of my humble labours.

M. STUART.

Theol. Seminary, Andover,
May, 1846.

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LETTERS

ON THE

DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY,

ORIGINALLY ADDRESSED TO THE

REV. WM. E. CHANNING.

LETTER I.

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I have recently perused a Sermon, delivered by you at the ordination of the Rev. J. Sparks, in Baltimore, with no small degree of interest. The subjects of which it treats must be regarded as highly important by every intelligent man, who is a serious inquirer after revealed truth. And if the views which you have disclosed will stand the test of examination, and shall appear to be those which the word of God maintains, or which it will justify, it certainly will be the duty of every friend to Christianity to embrace and promote them.

I have endeavoured to read your Sermon, and reflect upon it, without prejudice or party views. Unless I am deceived as to the state of my own feelings, I have endeavoured impartially to weigh the arguments and examine the reasonings which it presents, with a wish to know and believe the truth. I dare not flatter myself, indeed, that I have perfectly succeeded in doing this; for every man who is acquainted with his own heart, will find reason to believe, that he often has been, and may again be, deceived by it. Will you permit me, without further introduction or apology, to lay before you my thoughts in regard to three topics of your discourse, that stand in close connection with each other, and are among the principal points, in regard to which I feel myself compelled to dissent from your opinions?

The points to which I refer are: *The principles of interpreting Scripture; the unity of God; and the divinity and humanity of the Saviour.* I limit myself to these three, because it would require more time and labour than I can pos-

sibly spare at present, and more health than I enjoy, to examine all the statements of doctrines which you have made. I might adduce another reason for confining myself within these limits. If the principles of reasoning which you adopt, and the results which you deduce from them in regard to some of the points on which I am about to remark, are untenable, or incorrect, the consequences of this must extend themselves *essentially* to most of the remaining topics, which you have discussed in your Sermon.

The general principles of interpreting Scripture, you describe in the following manner.

"We regard the Scriptures as the records of God's successive revelations to mankind, and particularly of the last and most perfect revelation of his will by Jesus Christ. Whatever doctrines seem to us to be clearly taught in the Scriptures, we receive without reserve or exception. We do not, however, attach equal importance to all the books in this collection. Our religion, we believe, lies chiefly in the New Testament. The dispensation of Moses, compared with that of Jesus, we consider as imperfect, earthly, obscure, adapted to the childhood of the human race, a preparation for a nobler system, and chiefly useful now as serving to confirm and illustrate the Christian Scriptures. Jesus Christ is the only master of Christians, and whatever he taught, either during his personal ministry, or by his inspired apostles, we regard as of divine authority, and profess to make the rule of our lives.

"This authority which we give to the Scriptures, is a reason, we conceive, for studying them with peculiar care, and for inquiring anxiously into the principles of interpretation, by which their true meaning may be ascertained. The principles adopted by the class of Christians, in whose name I speak, need to be explained, because they are often misunderstood. We are particularly accused of making an unwarrantable use of *reason* in the interpretation of Scripture. We are said to exalt reason above revelation, to prefer our own wisdom to God's. Loose and undefined charges of this kind are circulated so freely, and with such injurious intentions, that we think it due to ourselves, and to the cause of truth, to express our views with some particularity.

"Our leading principle in interpreting Scripture is this, that the Bible is a book written for men, in the language of men,

and that its meaning is to be sought in the same manner as that of other books. We believe that God, when he condescends to speak and write, submits, if we may so say, to the established rules of speaking and writing. How else would the Scriptures avail us more than if communicated in an unknown tongue?

"Now all books, and all conversation, require in the reader or hearer the constant exercise of reason; for their true import is only to be obtained by continual comparison and inference. Human language, you well know, admits various interpretations, and every word and every sentence must be modified and explained according to the subject which is discussed, according to the purposes, feelings, circumstances, and principles of the writer, and according to the genius and idioms of the language which he uses.—These are acknowledged principles in the interpretation of human writings; and a man whose words we should explain without reference to these principles, would reproach us justly with a criminal want of candour, and an intention of obscuring or distorting his meaning.

"Were the Bible written in a language and style of its own, did it consist of words, which admit but a single sense, and of sentences wholly detached from each other, there would be no place for the principles now laid down. We could not reason about it, as about other writings. But such a book would be of little worth; and perhaps, of all books, the Scriptures correspond least to this description.

"The word of God bears the stamp of the same hand, which we see in his works. It has infinite connections and dependencies. Every proposition is linked with others, and is to be compared with others, that its full and precise import may be understood. Nothing stands alone. The New Testament is built on the Old. The Christian dispensation is a continuation of the Jewish, the completion of a vast scheme of providence, requiring great extent of view in the reader. Still more, the Bible treats of subjects on which we receive ideas from other sources besides itself; such subjects as the nature, passions, relations, and duties of man; and it expects us to restrain and modify its language by the known truths, which observation and experience furnish on these topics.

"We profess not to know a book, which demands a more frequent exercise of reason than the Bible. In addition to the remarks now made on its infinite connections, we may observe, that its style no where affects the precision of science, or the accuracy of definition. Its language is singularly glowing, bold,

and figurative, demanding more frequent departures from the literal sense, than that of our own age and country, and consequently it demands more continual exercise of judgment. We find too, that the different portions of this book, instead of being confined to general truths, refer perpetually to the times when they were written, to states of society, to modes of thinking, to controversies in the church, to feelings and usages, which have passed away, and without the knowledge of which we are constantly in danger of extending to all times and places, what was of temporary and local application. We find, too, that some of these books are strongly marked by the genius and character of their respective writers, that the Holy Spirit did not so guide the apostles as to suspend the peculiarities of their minds, and that a knowledge of their feelings, and of the influences under which they were placed, is one of the preparations for understanding their writings. With these views of the Bible, we feel it our bounden duty to exercise our reason upon it perpetually, to compare, to infer, to look beyond the letter to the spirit, to seek in the nature of the subject, and the aim of the writer, his true meaning; and, in general, to make use of what is known, for explaining what is difficult, and for discovering new truths.

"Need I descend to particulars to prove that the Scriptures demand the exercise of reason? Take, for example, the style in which they generally speak of God, and observe how habitually they apply to him human passions and organs. Recollect the declarations of Christ, that he came not to send peace, but a sword; that unless we eat his flesh, and drink his blood, we have no life in us; that we must hate father and mother; pluck out the right eye; and a vast number of passages equally bold and unlimited. Recollect the unqualified manner in which it is said of Christians that they possess all things, know all things, and can do all things. Recollect the verbal contradiction between Paul and James, and the apparent clashing of some parts of Paul's writings, with the general doctrines and end of Christianity. I might extend the enumeration indefinitely, and who does not see, that we must limit all these passages by the known attributes of God, of Jesus Christ, and of human nature, and by the circumstances under which they were written, so as to give the language a quite different import from what it would require, had it been applied to different beings, or used in different connections.

"Enough has been said to show in what sense we make use

of reason in interpreting Scripture. From a variety of possible interpretations, we select that which accords with the nature of the subject, and the state of the writer, with the connection of the passage, with the general strain of Scripture, with the known character and will of God, and with the obvious and acknowledged laws of nature. In other words, we believe that God never contradicts, in one part of Scripture, what he teaches in another; and never contradicts, in revelation, what he teaches in his works and providence. And we, therefore, distrust every interpretation, which, after deliberate attention, seems repugnant to any established truth. We reason about the Bible precisely as civilians do about the constitution under which we live; who, you know, are accustomed to limit one provision of that venerable instrument by others, and to fix the precise import of its parts by inquiring into its general spirit, into the intentions of its authors, and into the prevalent feelings, impressions, and circumstances of the time when it was framed. Without these principles of interpretation, we frankly acknowledge, that we cannot defend the divine authority of the Scriptures. Deny us this latitude, and we must abandon this book to its enemies." pp. 3—6.

To a great part of these principles, I give my cheerful and most cordial assent. They are the principles which I apply to the explanation of the Scriptures, from day to day, in my private studies and in my public labours. They are the principles, by which I am conducted to the opinions that I have espoused; and by which, so far as I am able, I expect to defend these opinions, whenever called in duty to do it.

While I thus give my cordial approbation to most of the above extract from your Sermon, will you indulge me in expressing a wish, that the rank and value of the Old Testament, in the Christian's library, had been described in somewhat different terms? I do most fully accord with the idea, that the gospel, or the New Testament, is more perfect than the Mosaic law, or than the Old Testament. On what other ground can the assertions of Paul in 2 Cor. iii, in Heb. viii, and in other places, be believed or justified? The gospel gives a clearer view than the Jewish Scriptures, of our duty and of our destiny; of the objects of our hopes and fears; of

the character of God and the way of salvation. I agree fully, that whatever in the Old Testament respects the Jews simply as Jews—e. g. their ritual, their food, their dress, their civil polity, their government, and (in a word) whatever from its nature was *national* and *local*—is not binding upon us under the Christian dispensation.

I am well satisfied, too, that the character of God and the duty of men were, in many respects, less clearly revealed under the ancient dispensation. "The law was given by Moses;" yet "no man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten, who dwelleth in the bosom of the Father, *he hath revealed him.*" In other words, it was reserved for Christ to make a *full* display of the divine character; no mere man ever had such a knowledge of God as enabled him to do it. I am aware that many Christians do not seem to understand this passage; and, with well meaning but mistaken views, deduce the character and designs of God as fully and as clearly from the Old Testament as from the New.*

I must believe too, that the duties of Christians are, in most things, more fully and definitely taught in the gospel than in the Old Testament; and I cannot approve of that method of reasoning, which deduces our duties principally from texts in the Old Testament that sometimes are less clear, when the New Testament presents the same subjects in such characters of light that he who runneth may read.

But when you say: "Jesus Christ is the only master of Christians, and whatever he taught, either during his personal ministry, or by his inspired apostles, we regard as of divine authority, and profess to make the rule of our lives;" does not this naturally imply, that we are absolved from obligation to receive the Old Testament, in any sense, as our guide; and that what it teaches, we are not bound "to make the rule of our lives?" I do not feel certain that it was your

* For more ample views of this interesting topic, I would refer the reader to the little work which I have recently published, entitled *Critical History and Defence of the Old Testament Canon*, p. 385 sq.

design to affirm this; but the words, in their connection, seem naturally to bear this import. To such a view I should oppose the consideration, that those parts of the Old Testament, which express the will of God in reference to the great points of duty, that must from the nature of moral beings be forever the same under every dispensation, may be, and ought to be, regarded as unrepealed. There is a very sound maxim, in the interpretation of divine as well as human laws, which runs thus: *Manente ratione, manet ipsa lex,* i. e. a law is unrepealed, while the reason of that law continues. Only express repeal can exempt a law from the application of this maxim. And when our Saviour says: "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled," he seems to me to have plainly declared the immutability of the ancient *moral* law, in the sense already explained.

What shall we say, moreover, of the devotional parts of the Old Testament, of the book of Psalms, for example? And what of those numerous prophetical parts, which are sermons on the duties and obligations of men, or predictions of a future Messiah and of the nature and prosperity of his church? Are these any more Jewish, (except as to the garb in which they are clothed), than Christian? I admit that they are all less perfect, than that which the New Testament furnishes on the same topics, inasmuch as this is an account of the fulfilment of ancient prophecies; but I believe both to be sanctioned by the same authority, and to require a similar respect and deference.

In regard to what follows, in the passage above quoted, I cannot hesitate to say, that nothing is clearer to my apprehension, than that God, when he speaks to men, speaks in language which is used by those whom he addresses. Of course, the language of the Bible is to be interpreted by the same laws, so far as philology is concerned, as that of any other book. I ask, with you: How else is the Bible a *revelation?* How else can men ever come to agree in what manner the Scripture should be interpreted, or feel any as-

surance that they have attained to the meaning of its language?

I find little from which I should dissent, in the remainder of your observations upon the *principles* of interpretation. I might, perhaps, make some objection to the manner, in which the office of reason in the interpretation of Scripture is occasionally described. But I am confident, that I admit as fully as you do or can do, the *proper office* of reason, in the whole matter of religion, both in regard to doctrine and practice. It is to our reason, that the arguments which prove the divine origin of Christianity are addressed; and it is by reason that we prove or admit this origin, on general historical grounds. Reason prescribes, or at any rate developes and sanctions, the laws of interpreting Scripture. The cases mentioned by you, in which reason must be exercised, are, in general, striking exemplifications of this. But when reason is satisfied that the Bible is the book of God, by proof which she cannot reject, and yet preserve her character; and when she has decided what laws of exegesis the nature of human language requires; the office which remains for her, in regard to the Scripture, is the application of those laws to the actual interpretation of the Bible. When by their application she becomes satisfied in respect to what the sacred writers really meant, in any case, she receives it without hesitation, whether it relates to a doctrine, a fact, or a precept. It is the highest office of reason to believe doctrines and facts which God has asserted to be true, and to obey his precepts; although many things in regard to the manner in which those facts and doctrines can be explained, or those precepts vindicated, may be beyond her reach. In short, the Scriptures once being admitted to be the word of God, or of divine authority, the sole office of reason in respect to them is to act as the *interpreter* of Revelation, and not in any case as a *legislator*.*

* It is evident from the later writings of Dr. Channing, that he admitted the divine authority of the Old Testament only in a very limited and qualified sense. Of the New Testament he would doubtless have said: 'It *contains* the word of God;' but not: 'It *is* the word of God.'

Reason can only judge of the appropriate laws of exegesis, and direct the application of them in order to discover simply what the sacred writers meant to assert. This being discovered, it is either to be received simply as they have asserted it, or their divine authority must be rejected, and our obligation to believe all which they assert must be denied. There is no other alternative. *Philosophy* has no right to interfere here. If she ever interferes, it must be when the question is pending, whether the Bible is divine. Nor has system, prejudice, sectarian feeling, orthodoxy or heterodoxy so called, any right to interfere. The claims of the Bible to be authoritative once being admitted, the simple question is: What does it teach? Of any particular passage we have only to ask: What idea did the original writer mean to convey? When this is ascertained by the legitimate rules of interpretation, it is authoritative. It is *orthodoxy* in the highest and best sense of the word; and everything which differs from it, which modifies it, which fritters its meaning away, is *heterodoxy*, is *heresy;* to whatever name or party it is attached.

I hope you will agree, without hesitation, to these remarks. The grand Protestant maxim, that *the Bible is the only and sufficient rule of faith and practice*, implies most clearly the very same principles which I have stated; and which every man must admit, who acknowledges the paramount claims of the Bible to be believed, and has any tolerable acquaintance with the subject of its interpretation.

If there be anything in your statement, generally considered, of the laws of *interpretation*, to which I object, it belongs mostly to the colouring which has been given to some of your language. You commence with saying, that your party are charged with "exalting reason above revelation;" with "preferring their own wisdom to God's;" and that "these charges are circulated freely and with injurious intentions." You

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In the first case, only so much is admitted to be authoritative, as agrees with our views of what is reasonable; in the second case, the Scripture is acknowledged as *the only rule of faith and practice.*

will readily acknowledge, as a general fact, that there is some difficulty in giving an impartial statement of opinions, which we very strongly feel to have been misrepresented. We certainly are under temptation, in such cases, to set off our own opinions to the best advantage, and to place those of our opponents in the most repulsive attitude. And although Trinitarians, in fact, differ less from you in respect to the laws of interpretation, than you seem to have apprehended, yet the belief, on your part, that a wide difference exists, seems to have given a peculiar cast to some of your sentences, which simple and unimpassioned discussion would hardly admit.

With the last two paragraphs of your Sermon, that are quoted above, I wish not to be understood as signifying that I entirely agree. It is, however, rather the *application* of some exegetical principles which is made in them, than the principles themselves, from which I dissent. I shall have occasion to remark hereafter on this subject. I have mentioned it now, merely to prevent any mistake with regard to the meaning of what I say here, respecting the laws of interpretation as exhibited by you.

It would have given me pleasure, to find you unconditionally admitting that the principles of interpretation which you defend, are not original, nor peculiar to your party. But you seem to qualify this by saying, that "*all Christians* OCCASIONALLY *adopt them.*" If I understand you rightly, then, you would admit, that only Unitarians receive the *whole system* of exegesis which you have described, and practise upon it. In this however, if this be your meaning, you are mistaken, in case you speak only of *leading* principles; at least it appears plainly so to me, in respect to the great mass of New England divines, who at the present time are called *orthodox*. I doubt whether any man can study the science of interpretation, for a considerable time together, without adopting those principles for *substance*, which you seem to claim appropriately (as a *whole*) for Unitarians. I speak not, of course, of

particular and occasional applications of these principles by Unitarians; to which, in certain cases, the orthodox can by no means assent.

How can it be explained, then, supposing that you and I are both sincerely seeking after truth, and that both adopt for substance the same maxims of interpretation, that we should differ so widely in the results that flow from the application of these principles? Perhaps some light may be cast upon this question in the sequel of these letters.

LETTER II.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

It would be very gratifying to find, in your Sermon, as much respecting the doctrine of the Trinity with which I might accord, as in your principles of interpretation. My apprehensions respecting this doctrine, however, differ from yours. It is not without some examination and reflection, that I have embraced my present views of it; and the perusal of your statement of the doctrine in question, and your arguments against it, have not persuaded me that my views are erroneous.

You will not expect me, however, in these letters, which are intended to be brief, to go into a discussion of this great subject, which shall embrace all the important topics which it presents. I intend to touch on those points only, on which the hinge of the controversy seems to me to turn; and on these, only in a manner as summary as the nature and difficulty of the case will permit.

The statement which you make of your own faith in regard to the *unity* of God, and your account of the doctrine of the Trinity, are as follows:—

"*First.* We believe in the doctrine of GOD'S UNITY, or that

there is one God, and one only. To this truth we give infinite importance, and we feel ourselves bound to take heed, lest any man spoil us of it by vain philosophy. The proposition *that there is one God* seems to us exceedingly plain. We understand by it, that there is one being, one mind, one person, one intelligent agent, and one only, to whom underived and infinite perfection and dominion belong. We conceive, that these words could have conveyed no other meaning to the simple and uncultivated people who were set apart to be the depositaries of this great truth, and who were utterly incapable of understanding those hair breadth distinctions between *being* and *person*, which the sagacity of latter ages has discovered. We find no intimation, that this language was to be taken in an unusual sense, or that God's unity was a quite different thing from the oneness of other intelligent beings.

"We object to the doctrine of the Trinity, that it subverts the unity of God. According to this doctrine there are three infinite and equal persons, possessing supreme divinity, called the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Each of these persons, as described by theologians, has his own particular consciousness, will, and perceptions. They love each other, converse with each other, and delight in each other's society. They perform different parts in man's redemption, each having his appropriate office, and neither doing the work of the other. The Son is mediator, and not the Father. The Father sends the Son, and is not himself sent; nor is he conscious, like the Son, of taking flesh. Here then, we have three intelligent agents, possessed of different consciousnesses, different wills, and different perceptions, performing different acts, and sustaining different relations; and if these things do not imply and constitute three minds or beings, we are utterly at a loss to know how three minds or beings are to be formed. It is difference of properties, and acts, and consciousness, which leads us to the belief of different intelligent beings, and if this mark fail us, our whole knowledge fails; we have no proof, that all the agents and persons in the universe are not one and the same mind. When we attempt to conceive of three Gods, we can do nothing more than represent to ourselves three agents, distinguished from each other by similar marks and peculiarities to those, which separate the persons of the Trinity; and when common Christians hear these persons spoken of as conversing with each other, loving each other, and performing different acts, how can they help regarding them as different beings, different minds?"—pp. 8, 9.

My object in *this* letter, is not so much to controvert your creed, as to remark on your exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity, as stated, believed, and defended, by those with whom I am accustomed to think and act.

Admitting that you have given a fair account of our belief; I cannot see, indeed, why we are not virtually guilty of *Tritheism*, or at least of something which approximates so near to it, that I acknowledge myself unable to distinguish it from Tritheism. But I cannot help feeling, that you have made neither an impartial, nor a correct, statement of what we believe, and what we are accustomed to teach and defend.

It needs but a moderate acquaintance with the *history* of the doctrine in question, to satisfy any one, that a great variety of explanations have been attempted by inquisitive, or by adventurous minds. All acknowledge the difficulty of the subject; I regret to say, that some have not refrained from treating it, as though it were more within their comprehension than it is.

But among all the different explanations, which I have found, I have not met with any one which denied, or at least was designed to deny, the UNITY OF GOD. All admit this to be a fundamental principle. All acknowledge that it is designated in characters of light, both in the Jewish and Christian revelations; and that to deny it would be the grossest absurdity, as well as impiety.

It may indeed be questioned, whether the explanations given of the doctrine of the Trinity, by some who have speculated on this subject, are consistent with the divine unity, when the language which they use is interpreted agreeably to the common laws of exegesis. But that their representations were not *designed* to call in question the *divine unity*, is what I think every candid reader of their works will be, or at least ought to be, disposed to admit.

Now when I consider this fact, so plain and so easily established, and then look at the method in which you state the doctrine of the Trinity, as exhibited above; I confess it gives me pain, to think that you have not conceded, or even inti-

mated, that Trinitarians do, or can, admit the unity of God. You have a right to say, if you so think, that the doctrine of the Trinity, as they explain and defend it, is at variance with the divine unity; and moreover, if you so believe, that these two things are inconsistent with each other. But to appropriate to those solely, who call themselves Unitarians, the belief that there is but one God; or to construct an account of the Trinitarian creed, (as it seems to me you have done, in the paragraph on which I am remarking), so as not even to intimate to your hearers or readers, that your opponents admit or advocate the divine unity; is doing that which you, as I am apt to think, would censure in an antagonist, and which cannot well serve the interests of truth.

But let us examine more particularly your statement of our creed:

"We object to the doctrine of the Trinity, that it subverts the unity of God. According to this doctrine, there are three infinite and equal persons, possessing supreme divinity, called the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Each of these persons, as described by theologians, has his own particular consciousness, will, and perceptions. They love each other, converse with each other, and delight in each other's society. They perform different parts in man's redemption, each having his appropriate office, and neither doing the work of the other. The Son is mediator, and not the Father. The Father sends the Son, and is not himself sent; nor is he conscious, like the Son, of taking flesh. Here then we have three intelligent agents, possessed of different consciousnesses, different wills, and different perceptions, performing different acts, and sustaining different relations; and if these things do not imply and constitute three minds or beings, we are utterly at a loss to know how three minds or beings are to be formed."—p. 9.

Is not this account a very different one from that which many of your brethren are accustomed to give of us? By them it is said, that there is a great variety of discordant and contradictory statements and explanations of the doctrine of the Trinity, among those who embrace it. Do not you amalgamate us all together; make us harmonious Tritheists; and

then give us over to the reproach of Tritheism, or at least of glaring inconsistency?

After all, the statement which you exhibit of our views, is very far from that which we, (or at least all Trinitarians with whom I am acquainted), make of our belief. I do not deny, that *some* writers have given grounds for a statement not very diverse from yours, as it regards the doctrine of the Trinity. Even some great and good men, in their zeal to defend this doctrine, have sought to reduce the whole subject to human comprehension. How vain the attempt, experience has demonstrated. Efforts of this nature, however well designed or ably conducted, never yet have led to anything but greater darkness. "Who can by searching find out God? Who can find out the Almighty to perfection?"

But though I readily admit, that efforts to explain what in the nature of the case is inexplicable, may have misled some in their exertions to acquire religious knowledge, or given occasion to others of stumbling; yet I am not prepared to admit, that the great body of Trinitarians have given just occasion to charge them with a denial of the unity of God, or with opinions subversive of this. You certainly ought not to deny them the same liberty, in the use of terms, which all men take on difficult subjects, for the accurate description of which, language is not framed, perhaps is not in its nature adequate. They must discuss subjects of such a nature by using *figurative* language; by using terms, which, (if I may be indulged the liberty of speaking thus), *approximate* as nearly to the expression of the ideas that they mean to convey, as any which they can select. If there is any obscurity in these general observations, I hope it will be cleared up in the remarks that are to follow.

Since I refuse assent to your statement of our belief, you will feel a right to inquire what we do believe, that you may compare this with the doctrine of divine unity, and judge for yourself, whether it is subversive of it or not. I cannot refuse my assent to a proposal so reasonable; nor do I feel any inclination to shrink from the task of stating our belief, or to

proffer the excuse for not explicitly stating it, that everything respecting the subject is too mysterious and recondite to be an object of distinct contemplation or statement. What we do believe can be stated; what we do *not* profess to define or explain can be stated, and also the reasons why we do not attempt definition or explanation; and this is what I shall now attempt.

I must not, however, be understood as pledging myself, that all those with whom in general I am accustomed to think and act, will adopt my statement, and maintain that it exhibits the best method of explaining or defending the great doctrine in question. Notwithstanding we are so often charged with adherence to forms and modes of expression as contained in creeds, we still employ as great a variety of language in expressing our views of the doctrine of the Trinity, as we do in respect to the other doctrines of religion. With regard to the statement which I shall make, I can say only, that it is not the result of concert, in any degree, with my clerical brethren, for the purpose of making a statement to which they will adhere. It is the result of investigation and reflection on the subject, as it appears to be exhibited in the Scriptures, and in the writings of the leading divines whom I have been able to consult.

I am now prepared to say, that I believe,

I. That God is ONE, *numerically one, in essence and attributes.* In other words, the infinitely perfect Spirit, the Creator and Preserver of all things, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, has *numerically* the *same essence*, and the *same perfections*, so far as they are known to us. To particularize; the Son possesses not simply a *similar* or *equal* essence and perfections, but *numerically the same* as the Father, without division, and without multiplication.

II. The Son (and also the Holy Spirit) does, in some respect *truly* and *really*, not merely nominally or logically, differ from the Father.

I am aware, as I have hinted above, that you may find writers upon the doctrine of the Trinity, who have stated the

subject of my first proposition in a manner somewhat different. But after making due allowances for inattention to precision of language, the difficulty of the subject, and the various expedients to which men naturally resort in order to illustrate a difficult subject, I am not aware that many of them would dissent, substantially, from the statement now made. Certain it is, that the Lutheran Confession exhibits the same view. The words are: "The divine essence is ONE, which is called, and is, GOD; eternal, incorporeal, indivisible; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Creator and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible."*

The Confession of Helvetia (written A. D. 1566) declares, that "God is ONE in essence or nature, subsisting by himself, all sufficient in himself, invisible, without a body, infinite, eternal, the Creator of all things visible and invisible, etc." It adds: "We detest the multitude of gods, because it is expressly written: The Lord, thy God, is *one* God, etc."

The Confession of Basil (A. D. 1532) declares, that there is "ONE eternal and almighty God, in essence and substance, and not *three gods*."

The Confession of the Waldenses states, that the Holy Trinity, is in essence one only true, *alone*, eternal, almighty, and incomprehensible God, of ONE equal and *indivisible* essence."

The French Confession (A. D. 1566) says: "We believe and acknowledge *one* only God, who is only one and simple essence, spiritual, eternal, invisible, immutable, infinite, etc."

The English Confession (A. D. 1562) states, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, "be of *one* power, of *one* majesty, of *one* eternity, of *one* Godhead, and *one* substance. And although these three persons be so divided, that neither the Father is the Son, nor the Son is the Holy Ghost, nor the Father; yet, nevertheless, we believe that there is but ONE very God."

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* Una est essentia divina, quæ appellatur, et est, DEUS; æternus, incorporeus, impartibilis; immensa potentia, sapientia, bonitate; Creator et Conservator omnium rerum, visibilium et invisibilium. (ART. I.)

The Confession of Belgium (A. D. 1566) declares, that "There is *one* only simple and spiritual essence, which we call God, eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, immutable, infinite, etc."

The Articles of the English episcopal church declare, that "there is but *one* living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions, etc."

The Confession of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands, revised at the Synod of Dort (A. D. 1618—1619), declares: "We believe that there is *one* only and simple, spiritual Being, which we call God; and that he is eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, immutable, infinite, etc." (Vide Harmony of Confessions.)

With these agrees the Westminter Confession, approved by the general Assembly of Divines in A. D. 1647, adopted by all the Presbyterian churches in Great Britain and America, and assented to by a great part of the Congregational churches in New England. Its words are: "There is but *one* only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, etc." (West. Con. p. 32.)*

Now is this the denial of the divine *unity*, with which we are implicitly charged? Can Unitarians present a more complete description of the divine unity, than is presented by these Symbols of different denominations of Christians, who admit the doctrine of the Trinity?

But, admitting our statement of the divine unity to be correct, you will probably aver, that my second proposition is subversive of my first. Whether this be so, or not, is what I now propose to investigate.

The common language of the Trinitarian Symbols is, that "*there are three* PERSONS *in the Godhead.*" In your comments upon this, you have all along explained the word *person*, just as though it were an established point, that Trinita-

* So too the Westminster Catechism: "The *same* in substance, equal in power and glory."

rians use this word in such a connection, in its *ordinary* acceptation as applied to *men*. But can you satisfy yourself that this is doing us justice? What fact is plainer from church history, than that the word *person* was introduced into the creeds of ancient times, merely as a term which would somewhat strongly express the disagreement of Christians in general with the reputed errors of the Sabellians, and others of similar sentiments, who denied the existence of any *real* distinction in the Godhead, and asserted that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, were merely *attributes* of God, or the names of different ways in which he revealed himself to mankind, or of different relations which he bore to them, and in which he acted? The Nicene fathers meant to deny the correctness of such views, when they used the word *person*. They designed to imply by it, that there was some *real*, not merely *nominal*, distinction in the Godhead; and that something more than a mere diversity of relation or action of the Godhead in respect to us, was intended. They used the word *person*, because they supposed it approximated nearer to expressing the existence of a *real* distinction, than any other which they could choose. Most certainly, neither they, nor any intelligent Trinitarian, could use this term in such a latitude as you represent us as employing it, and as you attach to it. We profess to use it merely because of the poverty of language; merely to designate our belief of a *real* distinction in the Godhead; but not to describe independent, conscious beings, possessing separate and equal essences and perfections. Why should we be obliged so often to explain ourselves on this point? Is there any more difficulty here, or anything more obnoxious, than when you say: "God is angry with the wicked every day?" You defend yourself in the use of such an expression, by saying, that it is only the language of rhetoric and figure; that it is merely intended to describe that in the mind of the Deity, or in his actions, which corresponds in some measure, or in some respect, to anger and its consequences in men; not that God is really affected with the passion of anger. Why will you

not permit me then to say that we speak of *persons* in the Godhead, in order to express that which in some respect or other corresponds to *persons* as applied to men, i. e. *some distinction; not* that we attach to it the meaning of three beings, with a *separate* consciousness, will, omnipotence, omniscience, etc.? Where then, considering the poverty of language in respect to expressing what belongs to the Deity, is our inconsistency in this, or how is there any absurdity in our language, providing there is a real foundation in the Scriptures on which we may rest the *fact* of a distinction, which we believe to exist?

I could wish indeed, on some accounts, that the word *person* had never come into the symbols of the churches, because it has been the occasion of so much unnecessary dispute and difficulty. But since it has been in common use so long, it is difficult now, perhaps impossible, altogether to reject it. If it must be retained, I readily concede that the use of it ought to be so guarded, as not to lead Christians generally into erroneous ideas of God. Nor can I suppose that the great body of Christians have such ideas, or understand it to mean that which you attribute to us as believing. Then surely it is not the best mode of convincing your opponents, to take the word in a sense so different from that in which they understand it, and then charge them with the absurdities consequent upon the *language* of their creed. It has always been a conceded point, that in the statement of difficult subjects, or the discussion of them, terms might be used aside from their ordinary import. And what can teach us in a plainer manner, that Trinitarians do use the word *person* in this way, than that they do universally agree that God is *one*, both in essence and in attributes?

It might have been justly expected, likewise, that before they were charged with subverting the divine unity, the meaning of the word *person*, in the ancient records which describe its first introduction into the symbols of the church, should have been carefully investigated. One of your rules of exegesis, to which I have with all my heart assented, de-

mands that "every *word* . . . . should be modified and explained according to the *subject* which is discussed, according to the PURPOSES, feelings, circumstances, and principles of the writer." Do us the justice to apply this law of interpretation to our language, and the dispute between us about the meaning of *person* is forever at an end.

What, then, you doubtless will ask, is the specific nature of that distinction in the Godhead, which the word *person* is meant to designate? I answer without hesitation, that I do not know. The *fact* that a distinction exists, is what we aver; the specific definition of that distinction is what I shall by no means attempt to make out. By what shall I, or can I, define it? What simile drawn from created objects, which are necessarily *derived* and *dependent*, can illustrate the mode of existence in that Being, who is underived, independent, unchangeable, infinite, eternal? I confess myself unable to advance a single step here, in explaining what the distinction is. *I receive the* FACT *that it exists, simply because I believe that the Scriptures reveal the* FACT. And if the Scriptures do reveal the fact, that there are three *persons* in the Godhead, (in the sense explained); that there is a distinction, which affords grounds for the respective appellations of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; which lays the foundation for the application of the personal pronouns, *I, Thou, He;* which renders it proper to speak of *sending* and *being sent;* to speak of Christ as *being with God, being in his bosom,* and of other things of the like nature in the like way, and yet to hold that the divine nature equally belongs to each; then it is, like every other fact revealed, to be received simply on the credit of divine revelation.

Is there any more difficulty in understanding the *fact* that there is a distinction in the Godhead, than there is in understanding the fact that God possesses an *underived* existence? With what shall we compare such existence? All other beings are *derived;* and, of course, there is no object in the universe with which it can be compared. To define it, then, is beyond our reach. We approximate towards a conception

of it, merely by *negatives*. We deny, for example, that the divine existence has any author or cause; and when we have done this, we have not defined it, but simply said that a certain thing does *not* belong to it. And here we must rest; for archangels, it is probable, cannot proceed beyond this.

The distinction in the Godhead, I ought to say here, we do not, and cannot, consider as a mere subject of speculation, which has little or no concern with ardent piety, or the best hopes of the Christian. We believe that some of the most interesting and endearing exhibitions of the divine character are founded upon it; and that corresponding duties are urged upon us, and peculiar hopes excited, and peculiar consolations administered, by it.

In regard to this distinction, we say: *It is not a mere distinction of attributes, of relation to us, of modes of action, or of relation between attributes and substance or essence*, so far as they are known to us. We believe the Scriptures justify us in these *negations*. But *here* we leave the subject. We undertake, (at least the Trinitarians of our country with whom I am acquainted undertake), *not* at all to describe *affirmatively* the distinction in the Godhead. When you will give me an *affirmative* description of underived existence, I may safely engage to furnish you with one of *person* in the Trinity. You do not reject the belief of the divine self-existence, merely because you cannot *affirmatively* define it; neither do we of a distinction in the Godhead, because we cannot *affirmatively* define it.

I may ask moreover: What is the *eternity* of God? You answer by telling me, that there never was a time when he did not exist, and never can be one when he will not exist. True; but then, what was *time*, before the planetary system which measures it had an existence? And what will *time* be, when these heavens and this earth shall be blotted out? Besides, passing over this difficulty about time, you have only given a *negative* description of God's eternity; you *deny* certian things of him, and then aver that he is *eternal*. Yet because you cannot *affirmatively* describe eternity, you would

not refuse to believe that God is *eternal*. Why then should I reject the belief of a distinction in the Godhead, because I cannot affirmatively define it?

I do not feel, therefore, that we are exposed justly to be taxed with mysticism and absurdity, when we admit that there is a distinction in the Godhead, which we feel utterly unable to define. I am aware, indeed, that a writer some time since published a piece, in a periodical work then edited at Cambridge, in which he laboured, with no small degree of acuteness, to show that no man can believe a proposition the terms of which are unintelligible, or which he does not understand. His object in doing this appears to have been, to fix upon those who believe in the doctrine of the Trinity the charge of absurdity. But it seems to me, that the whole argument of that piece is founded on a confusion of two things which are in themselves very diverse, viz., *terms* which are *unintelligible*, and *things* which are *undefinable*. You believe in the fact that the divine existence is without cause; you understand the *fact* that God exists uncaused, but you cannot define underived existence. I believe on the authority of the Scriptures, that there is a real distinction in the Godhead; but I cannot define the exact nature of it. Still, the proposition that there is a *real* distinction, is just as intelligible, as the proposition that God is self-existent. There are, indeed, multitudes of propositions respecting a variety of subjects, which resemble these. We affirm, for example, that gravitation brings a body, which is thrown into the air, down to the earth. The fact is altogether intelligible. The terms are perfectly understood, so far as they are employed to describe this fact. But then, *what is* gravitation? An affirmative definition cannot be given, which is not a mere exchange of synonymes. Nor can any comparison define it; for to what shall we liken it?

The mind of every man, who is accustomed to think, will supply him with a multitude of propositions of this nature; in all of which the *fact* designed to be described is clear; the terms so far as they describe this fact are clear; but the *sub-*

ject of the proposition, that is the thing itself, or the agent, concerning which the fact is asserted, is undefinable; and, excepting in regard to the fact in question, perhaps wholly unknown to us.

How easy now to perplex common minds, by calling a proposition *unintelligible*, the subject of which is merely *undefinable*. In confounding things so very different, consists, as I apprehend, the whole ingenuity of the piece in question; an ingenuity, which may excite the admiration of those who love the subtilties of dispute, but cannot contribute much to illuminate the path of theological science.

I have been thus particular, in my statement of this very difficult part of the subject, in order to prevent misapprehension. I certainly do not hold myself bound to vindicate any of the attempted definitions of *person* or *distinction* in the Godhead, at least any which I have yet seen, because I do not and cannot adopt them. My reason for this is, that I do not and cannot understand them; and to a proffered definition I cannot with propriety assent, still less undertake to defend it, until I do understand what it signifies. It is truly matter of regret to me, that some great and good men have carried their speculations on this subject to such a length, that, as I cannot help thinking, they have bewildered themselves and their readers. I would always speak with respect and tenderness of such men. Still I have no hesitation in saying, that my mind is absolutely unable to elicit distinct and certian ideas, from any of the proffered definitions in question which I have ever examined. May I be indulged with the liberty here of producing a few examples? In this way, I shall be able more readily to illustrate and establish what I have just said.

Let me begin with Tertullian, who flourished about A. D. 200. In his book against Praxeas (ch. 2) he says: "This perversity [viz. of Praxeas] thinks itself to be in possession of pure truth, while it supposes that we are to believe in one God, not otherwise than if we make the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the self same; as if all were not *one*, while all

are of one, viz. by a unity of substance; and still, the mysterious economy which distributes unity into a *Trinity* is observed, marking out [distinguishing] Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. There are three, not in condition but in rank; not in essence but form; not in power but in kind; but they are of *one* substance, condition, and power, for there is *one* God from whom those ranks, and forms, and kinds, are reckoned by the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

A little farther on he says: "Whatever, therefore, the substance of the Word (*Logos*) is, I call him a PERSON, and defend the application of this name to him; and while I acknowledge the Son, I maintain that he is *second* from the Father. . . . The *third* is the Spirit from God and the Son, as the fruit from the stalk is the third from the root; a sluice from the river [the third] from the fountain; the point from a ray of light [the third] from the sun. So the Trinity proceeds, by interlinked and connected grades, from the Father."

In Cap. 9, he says: "They (the Trinity) are not separate from each other, although the Father may be said to be diverse from the Son and the Spirit."

And again: "We are baptized into the persons [of the Trinity] severally, by the use of their several names."*

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* "Perversitas hæc (sc. Praxeae) se existimat meram veritatem possidere, dum unicum Deum non alias putat credendum, quam si ipsum eundemque et Patrem, et Filium, et Spiritum Sanctum dicat, quasi non sic quoque unus sit omnia, dum ex uno omnia, per *substantiae* scilicet *unitatem;* et nihilominus custodiatur *οἰκονομίας* sacramentum, quæ unitatem in TRINITATEM disponit, tres dirigens, Patrem, Filium, et Spiritum Sanctum. Tres autem non statu sed gradu; nec substantia sed forma; nec potestate sed specie: unius autem substantiæ, et status, et potestatis, quia unus Deus ex quo et gradus isti, et formæ, et species in nomine Patrem, Filium, et Spiritum Sanctum deputantur."

—"Quæcunque, ergo, substantia Sermonis (*τοῦ λόγου*) sit, illum dico PERSONAM et illi *nomen* vindico; et dum Filium agnosco, *secundum* a patre defendo.——*Tertius* est *Spiritus* a Deo et Filio, sicut tertius a radice fructus ex frutice; a fonte rivus ex flumine; a sole apex ex radio. Ita TRINITAS per consertos et connexos gradus a Patre decurrit.

—"Inseparati tamen ab alterutro, etsi dicatur alium esse Patrem, alium Filium et Spiritum.

—"Ad singula Nomina, in personas singulas tingimur."

It is proper to observe here, how plainly and definitely the words *person* and *Trinity* are applied by Tertullian to the Godhead; which contradicts the very confident affirmations of many writers, that these terms were merely an invention of later ages and of scholastic divinity. I may add, that the familiar and habitual use which Tertullian makes of them, proves that they were commonly understood, or at least commonly used in the church, at a very early period, and in reference to the very distinction in the Godhead which is the present subject of discussion. I believe the writings of this father afford the earliest specimen, now extant, of the technical use (if I may so speak) of the word *Trinity* and *Person*. His object cannot be mistaken. His antagonist, Praxeas, denied that there existed any distinction in the Godhead, or any except a mere *verbal* one. Tertullian means to assert the existence of a *threefold* distinction; and to designate this he uses the word *Trinity*. To signify that this distinction is *real*, and not merely nominal, he uses the word *person*. The Latin word *persona*, which he employs, means, when applied to *men*, that quality, state, or condition, whereby *man* differs from a *brute*, or whereby one man differs from another. Analogically with this meaning, Tertullian applies the word to the Godhead, i. e. to the distinctions which he supposed to exist in it, and which he regarded as real.

But to explain Tertullian's similitudes, so frequently copied in after ages, is more than I shall undertake. Who does not see, that all similitudes drawn from created, limited, dependent beings or things, must be utterly inadequate to illustrate the mode in which an uncreated, infinite, and omnipresent Being exists? What is even the attempt at explanation, but "darkening counsel by words without knowledge?" I believe with Tertullian in a threefold distinction in the Godhead; but I believe simply the *fact* of a Trinity, and do not venture to make any attempt at explanation, by comparison with material objects.

In like manner, Origen, who began to flourish before Tertullian's decease, reprehends those "who do not attribute

person (*ὑπόστασιν*) to the Word or *Logos*;" and shortly after he adds: "*Three persons* (*τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις*) we acknowledge, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;" (Comm. in Johan. p. 24.) I adduce this passage, however, only to show how early the use of the word *person*, as applied to the distinction in the Godhead, came to be employed by Christians, and not to prove the strict orthodoxy of Origen.

Have the venerable Council of Nice, held A. D. 325, succeeded any better than Tertullian, in their attempts to define the specific relation of the Son to the Father? Their words are: "We believe in one God, the Father almighty, the maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten not made, of the same substance with the Father, by whom all things were made."*

This Council believed, no doubt, in the *eternal generation* of the Son; and meant to affirm, by the peculiar phraseology which they have here exhibited, that one real and essential distinction between the Father and the Son consists in the fact of the eternal generation of the latter. Arius affirmed, that the Son was begotten (by which he meant *produced* or *created*) in time. The special object of the Nicene creed was, to express dissent from, and opposition to, the opinions of Arius and his partisans as to this particular. In order to do this, the Nicene fathers maintained that the generation of the Son was eternal.

For myself, I must confess that I am unable to attach any definite meaning to the phrase *eternal generation*. Or, to speak more explicitly, I cannot attach any definite meaning

* Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἕνα Θεόν, πατέρα, παντοκράτορα, πάντων ὁρατῶν τε καὶ ἀοράτων ποιητήν· καὶ εἰς ἕνα Κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὸν γεννηθέντα ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς μονογενῆ, τουτ' ἔστιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρός, θεὸν ἐκ θεοῦ, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρί· δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο, κ.τ.λ. — Symb. Nicaenum.

which consists with a tolerable explanation of these words, without virtually conceding that Christ is *not God supreme.* After all that has been said, or can be said, about the *mysterious* manner of Christ's generation, and in fact conceding for the moment that all which has been said in respect to it is true, it still remains a thing so plain as to be incapable of reasonable denial, that the *generation* of the Son in his *divine* nature, however mysterious or incomprehensible, imports at least a *derivation* in some sense or other. It is impossible to deny this, unless all regard to the proper meaning of words is laid aside. And if the *Logos*, i. e. Christ in his *divine* nature, was *derived*, then he can be neither *self-existent* nor *independent.* Indeed, the strenuous and consistent advocates of the Nicene creed do not admit the *self-existence* and the *independence* of the Son. Taking it for granted that *sonship* is applicable to the *divine* nature, (and the Nicene creed is plainly built on this), and that it must of necessity imply *derivation* in some sense, or at least with respect to that nature, they must of course, in order to be consistent, deny that Christ is *αὐτόθεος* or self-existent; and consequently, if still consistent, they must maintain that he is *not* independent.

With this view of the Nicene fathers I cannot here enter into controversy; but it may justly be demanded of me, in present circumstances, to be explicit as to my own views of this doctrine. Very briefly then would I say, that, instructed as I have been in respect to the nature of *true Godhead*, it is impossible for me to predicate this quality of any being who is neither *self-existent* nor *independent.* These are the ultimate, highest, plainest, and most certain of all the discretive attributes of Godhead, i. e. attributes which separate the divine Being from all other possible beings. If the Son possess not these attributes, then he can be only a *θεὸς δεύτερος*, i. e. a God of secondary rank; and so Origen and others have actually named him. The ancient fathers, many of them nurtured in the bosom of a heathen religion which admitted the endless generation and multiplicity of gods, felt much less difficulty in believing in the generation of a nature

which was in their view truly divine, than we of the present day must feel, after all the discussions which have taken place about the true *spiritual* nature of the Godhead. Applying the *sonship* of Christ to his divine nature, and overlooking the declarations on this subject of a celestial interpreter (Luke 1: 35), they felt themselves bound to maintain a generation of the *divine* nature of the Son, while they still most explicitly avowed their belief in his true divinity; for θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, i. e. *very God of very God*, most surely implies this. I believe that what they *substantially* aimed at, is a doctrine of Scripture. But I cannot subscribe to their terminology, for the reasons stated above. If their words are to be interpreted by any of the common laws of exegesis, they must import a *derivation* and *dependence* of the Son, in his divine nature. But how can a being be regarded as supreme God, who is neither self-existent nor independent? Still, if the Nicene fathers failed as to proper modes of expression, this should not be put to the account of the Bible. John says not one word of the LOGOS, as such, which would lead us, in the way of simple interpretation, to conclude that in this nature he is either derived or dependent; and John is the only New Testament writer who has expressly treated of the Logos, and disclosed to us his original state.

The Nicene creed then is not, I must confess, sufficiently orthodox for me. I believe that Christ is "God over all, and blessed for ever;" that he is "the true God and eternal life;" that "he made all things;" and that "he who did make all things is GOD." A θεὸς δεύτερος—a God of secondary rank—seems to me altogether incompatible with the true spiritual doctrine of scriptural Christianity. Yet I am far from thinking that the Nicene fathers designed to assert and maintain the actual *inferiority* of the Son; although they do so strenuously maintain his *generation* or *derivation*. We must not scan their metaphysical notions by the philosophy of the present day. I agree with them in their most important position, (i. e. in what I deem to be their most impor-

tant one), viz. that the Son is ὁμοούσιος τῷ πατρί, and of course θεὸς ἀπηθινός, i. e. of the same substance with the Father, and therefore true God. You will not allege, that their metaphysical views of the connection between Father and Son, or their mode of stating them, are fairly to be put to the account of the Bible, or of the orthodox Christianity of the present day. They may have erred in respect to both these, and still not be chargeable with any intention to deny the proper divinity of Christ; much less with any intention to mislead others, or even to substitute their own speculations in the room of those views which the sacred writers maintain.

I have one thing more to say, in relation to this whole subject, which I may as well say here; for, if correct, it ought to have an important bearing on modes of expression in relation to the whole matter before us. It is this, viz. the *imperfection of language* is such, that words can scarcely be employed with regard to some parts of the subject under discussion, without liability to be misunderstood. Every word is a symbol of some idea of our minds; and all our ideas are the result of sensation, consciousness, and reflection. Now the essential nature and relations of the divine Being are not within the circle of either of these sources of ideas and words. Of course, no part of language was originally formed in reference to expressing the internal constitution (so to speak) of the Godhead. A secondary and tropical sense, therefore, in a greater or less degree, must of necessity be attached to all the words which we employ respecting the essence of the Godhead. The sober inquirer, who is fully cognizant of this, will never think of believing or denying what the mere literal sense of words thus employed would convey. He must not believe in *Tritheism*, because *Trinity* and *three persons* in the Godhead are spoken of in his creed; nor should he insist that such words necessarily infringe upon the *unity* of the Godhead: for it is only by taking the words in a *literal* sense, that he can make this out. It is here we may well say: "The *letter* killeth, but the *Spirit* maketh alive."

A familiar example may illustrate this. John says: "The

Word was *with* God." From the time of Arius downwards, it has been asked, and asked with an air bespeaking confidence that no satisfactory answer could be given: 'How could the Word be *with* God, unless he was a being different from him? A being who is *with* another, cannot be that other being.' True altogether, I would reply, provided two things are first made out, viz. first, that the two beings mentioned are shown to be separate or different beings, in the usual sense of these words; and secondly, when it is made certain, that the word *with* has the same sense here as it would have in case a similar assertion were made of two beings known to be distinct. But who can establish either of these? From the tenor of the context in John, it is plain enough that the Logos is not an inferior being; for he is represented as *God*, and as the *Creator* of all things. If so, then he has an *underived* existence himself; and therefore must be *spiritual* in his nature. What then is it for such a *Spirit* to be *with* God? This cannot be made out from any notion of ours about mere physical proximities or nearness of material objects. The nearest that we can come to the meaning of the word *with* here, seems to be that which is expressed by the phrase *conjunctissimus cum Deo*, i. e. most intimately connected with God. But why should John say the thing in question at all? My own apprehension is, that the need of saying it lay in some Gnostic errors of the day, which affirmed of the Aeon Logos, a state of existence entirely separate from its original source. As John felt himself obliged to employ the same name (λόγος), he took care duly to distinguish his Logos from that of the Gnostics. Viewed in this light, the word *with* designates that which is adverse to the position of the errorists in question, rather than something positive and affirmative in its nature. At all events, the word *with* stands in such a connection, that none of its ordinary and *local* meanings can be attached to it, in consistency with the true nature of the subject to which it has relation.

So is it with a multitude of objections raised against the doctrine of the Trinity, from the mere *forms* of expression

employed in the New Testament. Their efficacy or validity, as objections, depends entirely on interpreting language, as applied to the Godhead, according to its ordinary meaning when applied to other things. This cannot be any more correct, than it is to say, with the Swedenborgians, that God has a visible material form, because man is said to be made in his image, and because the ordinary parts and powers of a human body are ascribed to him. The *nature* of a being must always direct the sense of words which are employed to describe him. We concede this, in the interpretation of all other books; and why should we deny it, when the meaning of scriptural language is the subject of examination?

But I must refrain from further remarks here, and remit the reader to the *Supplementary Note*, added to the present edition, and inserted at the end of Letter II. In this, I have attempted an outline of the *grounds of dispute* in regard to the nature and person of Christ, in ancient times, and a summary account of attempts in modern times to define the word *person*, as applied to the Godhead. I have added to these such reflections as the nature of the case seemed to require. I would hope that what has cost me very serious labour, may not be without some value to the reader.

One word more, at present, in respect to the Council of Nice. The Nicene fathers seem to have intended to make out something like an *affirmative* or *positive* definition of the distinction between the Father and the Son, by asserting his eternal generation. That they have failed to do this in a satisfactory manner, is sufficiently evident. But I cannot think that they are fairly exposed to a charge of designed intrusion into the mysteries of the Godhead, or even of intending to introduce useless and unmeaning words into their Symbol.

The Council of Constantinople, reckoned as the second ecumenical Council (A. D. 381), in their synodic address to the churches, say, that "it is the most ancient faith, and agreeable to baptism, to believe in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and of course one godhead, power,

and substance of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is believed, and equal dignity and coeternal dominion in three most perfect hypostases, or three perfect persons; so that neither the pest of Sabellius shall have place, which confounds the persons, i. e. takes away their distinctive peculiarities; nor the blasphemy of the Eunomians, Arians, and opposers of the Holy Spirit prevail, which destroys the substance, or nature, or godhead, by adding to the uncreated, consubstantial, and coeternal Trinity something of posterior origin, or of a created and heterogeneous nature."*

This Council have left somewhat undefined the manner in which they mean to use the words, "three most perfect hypostases, or three perfect persons;" excepting that they have avowed their belief in ONE *godhead, power, and substance.* A question might be raised, whether they really mean *numerical* unity of substance and power in the persons of the Godhead, or only equality of rank and homogeneousness of substance. The spirit of the times, and the state of philosophy at that period, would favor the latter supposition; although I do not think that it can be made out with certainty. One thing however is clear; which is, that they aim at vindicating the *unity* of the Godhead and the *equality* of the hypostases or persons of the Trinity, without sacrificing the distinctive attributes of these hypostases. My belief is, that the main thing which they mean to assert is true; but they have left a little too indefinite what they meant by the distinctions in the Godhead. There can be no doubt that they

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* — πιστεύειν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρός, τοῦ υἱοῦ, καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος ἁγίου· δεladὴ θεότητός τε καὶ δυνάμεως καὶ οὐσίας μίας τοῦ πατρός, τοῦ υἱοῦ, καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος ἁγίου πιστευομένης, ὁμοτίμου τε τῆς ἀξίας καὶ συναϊδίου τῆς βασιλείας ἐν τρισὶ τελειοτάταις ὑπώστασιν, ἤγουν τρισὶ τελείοις προσώποις· ὡς μήτε τὴν Σαβελλίου νόσον χώραν λαβεῖν, 'συγχεομένων τῶν ὑποστάσεων, ἤγουν ἰδιοτήτων ἀναιρουμένων· μήτε τὴν Εὐνομιάνων, 'Αρειάνων, καὶ Πνευματομάχων τὴν βλασφημίαν ἰσχύειν, τῆς οὐσίας, ἢ τῆς φύσεως, ἢ τῆς θεότητος τεμνομένης, καὶ τῇ ἀκτίστῳ, καὶ ὁμοουσίῳ, καὶ συναϊδίῳ Τριάδι μεταγενεστέρας τινός, ἢ κτιστῆς, ἢ ἑτεροουσίου φύσεως ἐπαγουμένης.—Theod. Hist. Ecc. V. 9.

meant to assert, in the strongest terms, their antipathy to Sabellianism and Arianism.

Let us now leave antiquity, and glance for a moment at some of the similar attempts in modern times. The celebrated Leibnitz, was requested by Loefler, who had undertaken to refute the writings of a certain English Antitrinitarian, to give him an affirmative definition of the *persons* in the Godhead. He sent for answer the following: "Several persons, in an absolute substance numerically the same, signify several, particular, intelligent substances essentially related."* On further consideration he abandoned this, and sent a second answer; which was, that "several persons, in an absolute substance numerically the same, mean relative and incommunicable modes of subsisting."†

If Leibnitz actually and definitely understood this, I must believe that he was a good master of metaphysics. Still if he had added to the latter clause the word *undefinable* or *indescribable*, his definition might be regarded as being as good as the nature of the case admits. I should also prefer to leave out the word *incommunicable;* inasmuch as we cannot be quite certain of the fact which it asserts, (provided *person* implies neither *essential* essence or attribute), and because many Trinitarians have regarded and defined personality as = *modus subsistendi*, and as something which might be communicated. In fact, Leibnitz himself appears not to have been entirely satisfied with his own attempt at definition; for, not long after, he wrote to a friend as follows: "We must say, that there are *relations* in the divine substance, which distinguish the *persons*, since these persons cannot be absolute substances. But we must aver, too, that these relations are *substantial*. At least we must say, that the divine persons are not the same concrete, under different denominations or

* Plures personæ, in eadem numero substantia absoluta, significant plures substantias singulares, intelligentes, essentialiter relativas.

† Plures personae, in eadem numero substantia absoluta, intelliguntur per modos subsistendi relativos, incommunicabiles.

relations; as a man may be, at the same time, both a poet and an orator. We must say, moreover, that the three persons are not as absolute substances as the whole."*

With as little success, did that somewhat original thinker and reasoner, the celebrated Toellner of Frankfort, labour to define the distinction in question. "It is certain," says he, "that we must conceive, as coexisting in God, three eternal and really different actions, the action of operation, of idea, and of the desire of all possible good within and without him.

"Three really different actions, coexisting from eternity, necessarily presuppose three really different and operative causes. It is thus, through the aid of reason quickened by the Scriptures, we come to know, that the power, the understanding, and the will, in God are not merely three faculties, but three distinct energies, i. e. three substances."†

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* Remarques sur le livre d' un Antitrinitaire Anglois, p. 26. I cannot think, however, that he has added much explicitness to his former statement. What are *relations substantial*? He must mean, as it seems to me, *relations that pertain to substance;* for the *substantiality* of a relation, in any other sense than this, is not intelligible to me. The last clause, "that the three persons are not as absolute substances as the whole," has added nothing to the perspicuity of the matter. The implication seems to be, that the three persons are so many substances, but not absolute. Now what is a *substance* in God, which is not absolute? And if *numerical unity* of substance is predicable of the Godhead, how can *diversity* of substances be attributed to him? *Personality*, which implies *diversity*, cannot well be predicated of *essential substance* or of essential attributes; for these are numerically one. His former definition, therefore, comes nearer to the mark. See Supp. Note, at the end of this Letter.

† Es ist gewiss, dass wir uns in Gott drey ewige wahrhaftig von einander unterschiedene Handlungen neben einander, gedenken müssen; die Handlung des Wirkens, der Vorstellung, und des Begehrens alles möglichen Guten in und ausser ihm.

Drey wahrhaftig verschiedene Handlungen, zugleich von Ewigkeit her neben einander, erfordern auch von Ewigkeit her drey von einander wahrhaftig verschiedene handelnde Gründe. Und so verkennen wir mit der durch die Schrift erweckten Vernunft, dass die Kraft, der Verstand, und der Wille, in Gott nicht drey blosse Vermögen, sondern drey von einander verschiedene Kräfte, das ist drey Substanzen sind. [*Vermischte Aufsätze.* B. i. p. 81. edit. 1769.]

This does not, indeed, seem to be very intelligible. But still, the basis of this attempt at definition has something in it deserving of notice. It is simply this, viz. that three modes of development in the Godhead, presuppose correspondent diversities, in some respect or other, in the substance or attributes of the Divinity.

I will produce but one instance more; which is found in the works of the celebrated Lessing, himself far enough from being a theologian, but sometimes inclined to speculate about subjects of difficulty. "Must not God," says he, "have the most perfect idea of himself? That is, an idea which comprises everything that is comprised in himself. Could this however be the case, if of his necessary reality, as of his other attributes, there were merely an idea, merely a possibility? This possibility exhausts the being of his other attributes; but can it exhaust his necessary reality?* Consequently, God can either have no perfect idea of himself; or this perfect idea is even as necessarily actual as he himself is."†

If now Lessing himself understood his own problem, I think that I hazard nothing in declaring my conviction, that he was the only man who has been able to understand it.

I have not produced these instances, merely in order to satisfy you, that all attempts of this nature are and must be

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* I have rendered the German literally here; but I am not certain that I understand the meaning. I suppose *exhaust* means, *is adequate to comprise, extends to the whole of, represents the whole.* Quicunque melius intelligit, corriget.

† Muss Gott nicht die vollständigste Vorstellung von sich selbst haben? d. i. eine Vorstellung in der sich alles befindet was in ihm selbst ist. Würde sich aber alles in ihr finden was in ihm selbst ist, wenn auch von seiner nothwendigen Würklichkeit, so wie von seinen übrigen Eigenschaften, sich blos eine Vorstellung, sich blos eine Möglichkeit fände? Diese Möglichkeit erschöpft das Wesen seiner übrigen Eigenschaften; aber auch seiner nothwendigen Würklichkeit? Folglich, kann entweder Gott gar keine vollständige Vorstellung von sich selbst haben; oder diese Vorstellung ist eben so nothwendig würklich als er selbst ist. (*Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts.* 1785, p. 68.)

fruitless. You doubtless need no such proof. I have produced them for two reasons: the first, to justify myself, in some good measure, for not attempting a definition in which no one has yet succeeded; the second, to show, that notwithstanding all the fruitless attempts at definition which have been made, and notwithstanding the varieties of method in which men have chosen to make these attempts, yet, for *substance*, there is a far greater unanimity of opinion among Trinitarians, than you and your friends seem to be willing to concede. That there is a great variety in the modes by which an attempt at definition or illustration is made, is indeed clear enough. But this does not prove so much an actual variety of views, as it illustrates the difficult nature of the undertaking. With my present feelings I am disposed to look upon all attempts of this nature with regret. I expect no light from them. But I am far from accusing such attempts in general of any ill design; and surely I would not treat them with contempt.*

Patient investigation and candour will lead one to believe, as it seems to me, that the *thing aimed at in the main was, simply to assert the idea of a distinction in the Godhead.* To do this with the more success, as the writers hoped, some of them endeavoured to describe *affirmatively* the nature of that distinction. But here they have all failed. But how can this prove, that there is actually a great variety of opinion among Trinitarians, in regard to the substance of the thing in question, merely because endeavours to define this thing have been unsuccessful, and have produced a great variety in the attempted methods of illustration? I cannot help feeling that this matter is sometimes misrepresented, and that very generally it is imperfectly understood.

But quitting this topic, permit me now to ask, whether you feel yourself able, by any argument *a priori*, to prove to me that the doctrine of the Trinity is inconsistent with itself,

* See the subject of *definitions* as further illustrated, in the Supp. Note at the end of the present Letter.

or (as you aver) "subversive of the doctrine of divine unity," and therefore untrue? We say that the divine essence and attributes are *numerically one*, so far as they are known to us; but that there are in the Godhead some *real distinctions;* for example, between the Father and the Son. (I omit the consideration of the *Holy Spirit* here, because your Sermon merely hints at this subject, and because all serious difficulties in respect to the doctrine of the Trinity, are essentially connected with proving or disproving the divinity of Christ). *I abjure, for myself, all attempts to define those distinctions; I admit them simply as a* FACT; *and this, on the authority of divine revelation.* Now how can you prove, that a distinction does *not* exist in the Godhead? I acknowledge that the want of evidence in the Scriptures to establish the fact, would be a sufficient reason for rejecting it. But we are thus far making out a statement of the subject, and answering objections that are urged, in an *a priori* way, or independently of the Scriptures. The proof which the New Testament exhibits, we are hereafter to examine. How then, I repeat it, are you to show that we believe in a *self-contradiction,* or in an *impossibility?* If the distinction in question cannot be proved, independently of the Scriptures, (and most readily I acknowledge it cannot), it is equally certain that it cannot be disproved in an *a priori* way. In order to prove that such a distinction contradicts the divine unity, must you not be able, first of all, to tell what that distinction is, and then what the divine unity is? Can you do either?

Will you allow me to dwell, for a moment, on this point of *unity.* It is clear, as I think, that the unity of God cannot be satisfactorily proved without revelation. It may perhaps be rendered probable. Then we must depend, as it would seem, on *scriptural* proof for the thorough establishment of this doctrine. But have the Scriptures anywhere told us *what* the divine unity is? Will you produce the passage? The *oneness* of God they often assert. But this they assert, always, *in opposition to the idols of the heathen—to the polytheism* of the Gentiles—to the gods superior and inferior

which the heathen worshipped. In no other way have the Scriptures defined the ONENESS of the Deity. What then is *oneness*, in the uncreated, infinite, eternal Being? In created and finite objects, we have a distinct perception of what we mean by it; but can *created* objects be both just and adequate representatives of the *uncreated* God? Familiar as the assertion is, in your conversation and in your Sermons, that GOD IS ONE, can you give me any other definition of this *oneness*, except a negative one? You deny plurality of it; you say God is but one, and not two, nor more. All this is mere negation. In what, I ask, does the divine unity actually and positively consist? God surely has different and various faculties and powers. Is he not almighty, omniscient, omnipresent, holy, just, good? Does he not act differently, i. e. variously, both in the natural and in the moral world? Unity, therefore, is not an universal sameness of attribute or of action. Does it consist, then, appropriately in his *essence*? But what is the essence of God? And how can you assert that his unity consists appropriately and solely in this, unless you know what his essence is, and so be able to judge, whether oneness can be more certainly predicated of this than of his attributes and actions?

Your answer to all this is: 'The nature of God's essence is beyond my reach; I cannot define it. I can approach to a definition of the divine unity, only by negatives.' In other words, you deny the *numerical* plurality of God; or you say, that there are not two or more essences, omnisciences, omnipotences, etc. But here all investigation, at least all knowledge, is at an end. Is it possible to show what it is, which constitutes the *internal nature* of the divine essence or attributes? To show *how* these are related to each other, or what internal distinctions exist? Of all this revelation says not one word; and certainly the book of nature gives no instruction concerning it. The assertion then that God is *one*, means, when fairly and intelligently understood, nothing more positively than that he is *numerically* one, i. e. it simply denies polytheism. Beyond this it can never reach. The

man who makes this assertion, does not pretend that he has made an analysis of the divine *substance* or essence, and proved in this way, (if I may so speak), a unity of constituent material. That God is *one*, does not mean that there is but one simple element in his nature, (for this we do not and cannot know), but that there is in him only one intelligent agent. But how does such a position prove, or how can it prove, that there may not be, or that there are not, *distinctions* in the Godhead, either in regard to attributes or in respect to essence, the nature of which is unknown to us, and the actual existence of which is proved by the authority of the Scriptures only? When Unitarians therefore inquire: What is that distinction in the Godhead in which you believe? We answer, that we do not profess to understand *what* it is; we do not undertake to define it positively or affirmatively. We can approximate toward a definition of it, only by *negatives*. We deny that the Father is, in *all* respects, the same as the Son; we deny that the Holy Spirit is, in *all* respects, the same as either the Father or the Son. We rest the *fact*, that a distinction actually exists, solely upon the basis of revelation.

In respect to principle, then, what more difficulty lies in the way of believing in a threefold distinction of the Godhead, than in believing in the divine unity?

I am certainly willing to allow, that the evidences of the divine unity in the New Testament are sufficient. But I may be permitted to suggest, here, that in my view, *the passages asserting it are considerably fewer in number, than the passages which assert or imply that Christ is truly divine.* I cannot but think that the frequent assertions of your Sermon, and of Unitarians in general, with regard to this subject, are very erroneous; that they are made at hazard, and without a diligent and faithful comparison of the number of texts in the New Testament which respect the divine unity, and the number of those which concern the *divinity* of the Saviour. After all, to what purpose is it, that so great a multitude of texts should be required in order to prove the divinity of

Christ, by those who believe, as you profess to do, that the decisions of the Scriptures are of divine authority? The decision of one text, fairly made out by the laws of exegesis, is as authoritative as that of a thousand. Would a law a thousand times repeated, have any more *authority* attached to it in consequence of the repetition? It might be better explained, by the repetition in different connections; but its *authority* would be uniformly the same.

But to return from this digression; suppose I should affirm that two subjects A and B are *numerically* identical in regard to what may be called X, but diverse, or distinct, in regard to something else called Y; is there any absurdity or contradiction in this affirmation? I hope I shall not, by making this supposition, be subjected to the imputation of endeavouring to prove the doctrine of the Trinity by the science of algebra; for my only object in proposing this statement is, to illustrate the answer that we may make to a very common question, which Unitarians put us: "How can three be one, and one three?" In no way, I readily answer, provided the one and the three both relate to the same specific thing, and in the same respect. "How then is the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity to be vindicated?" In a way I would reply, which is not at all embarrassed by these, or by any of the like, questions. *We do not maintain that the Godhead is* THREE *in the same respects that it is* ONE, *but the reverse.* In regard to X, (if I may resort once more to this mode of illustration), we maintain a numerical unity; in regard to Y, we maintain a threefold distinction. I repeat it: *We maintain simply the fact that there is such a distinction; and we do this, only on scriptural authority.* We do not profess to understand specifically in what the distinction consists, nor that we are able to define it.

Will you not concede, now, that there is some reason for complaint on our part, that, from the time in which Tertullian maintained the doctrine of the Trinity against Praxeas down to the present hour, the views and statements of Trini-

tarians, in regard to this subject, should have been so frequently misunderstood or misrepresented?

I have dwelt sufficiently on my statement of the doctrine of the Trinity, and on the difficulties that lie in the way of proving this statement to be erroneous or contradictory. Before I proceed to the next topic, I will merely mention, in a brief way, two of the most formidable objections to our views which I have seen, and which were adduced by two men, who must be reckoned among the most intelligent that have embraced the cause of Unitarianism. The first is from Faustus Socinus, and runs thus:

"No one is so stupid, as not to see that these things are contradictory, that our God, the creator of heaven and earth, should be *one only* in number, and yet be three, each of which is our God. For as to what they affirm, that our God is one in number, in respect to his essence, but threefold in regard to persons; here again they affirm things which are self-contradictory, since two or three persons cannot exist, where there is numerically only one individual essence, and to constitute more than one person, more than one individual essence is required. For what is person, but a certain individual, intelligent essence? Or in what way, I pray, does one person differ from another, unless by the diversity of his individual or numerical essence? . . . . This implies, that the divine essence is numerically *one* only, yet there is more than one person; although the divine essence which is numerically one, and the divine person, are altogether identical."* (Opp. tom. i. p. 697.)

* Nemo est tam stolidus, qui non videat, pugnare hæc inter se, illum Deum nostrum coeli terraeque creatorem esse unum tantum in numero, et tamen tres esse, quorum unusquisque sit ille Deus noster. Nam quod aiunt unum quidem esse numero Deum, sed ratione essentiae, trinum vero ratione personarum; rursus hic sibi invicem repugnantia loquuntur, cum tres vel etiam duae personae esse nequeant, ubi est una tantum numero sive individua essentia, et ad plures una persona constituendas plures etiam una individuæ essentiæ requirantur. Nam quid aliud persona est, quam quædam individua intelligens essentia? Aut qua potissimum ratione diversa est persona alia ab alia, nisi diversitate individuæ sive

Here, however, it is obvious that the whole weight of the objection, lies in an assumed, and (I may add) erroneous, use of the words *person* and *essence*. Socinus attaches to them a material and human sense, one which enlightened Trinitarians do not admit. How then can Trinitarians be charged with inconsistencies, in propositions which they do not make, or which at least they do not design to make?

Of the same tenor with the objection of Socinus, is the objection mentioned by the famous Töllner, (theol. Untersuchungen, B. I. p. 29), which, to save room, I shall merely translate, without subjoining the original. "The most considerable objection," says he, [against the doctrine of the Trinity] "is this, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are each a particular substance endowed with understanding; and at the same time, neither of them is said to have his separate being, his separate understanding, his separate will, his separate power of action; but all three together have only one being, one understanding, one will, one power of action. As it appears then, it is affirmed that there are three real beings, truly separate; each, consequently, having his own individual power of action, and yet not having it; three separate persons, and three persons not separate."

All the difficulty, which this acute writer in his usual way has so strikingly portrayed, lies merely in the representations of those Trinitarians, who have expressed themselves on this subject so incautiously, as to be understood to affirm, that there are three *separate* beings, (persons in the *common* sense of the word), in the Godhead, with distinct powers, volitions, etc. If there be any now, who defend such a statement of this subject, I must leave them to compose the difficulty with Töllner, as they can. The view of the doctrine of the Trinity given by Töllner, is not that which I have presented, or which I should ever undertake to defend. Of course it can-

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unius numero essentiæ? . . . . Implicat divinam essentiam unam tantum numero esse, non tamen unam tantum esse divinam personam, sed plures, cum divina essentia numero una, et divina persona, idem omnino reapse sint.

not be fairly adduced as an objection, against the statement which I have given and undertaken to defend.

The second objection, to which I referred above, appears at first sight more formidable and perplexing. It comes from Taylor, and was inserted in the English Theological Magazine; (Vol. I. No. 4. p. 111. 1770). I have not opportunity of access to the original, and take the ideas from a Latin translation of the piece, which was published in Germany.

"There can," says Taylor, "be no real distinction between the Father and the Son, unless they so differ from each other, that what is peculiar to the Father, is wanting in the Son; and what is peculiar to the Son, is wanting in the Father. Now that property which belongs exclusively to the Father, or the Son, must be numbered among the perfections of God; for in the divine nature no imperfections can exist. It follows then, that some perfection is lacking, both in the Father and in the Son, so that neither is endowed with infinite perfection, which is essential to the divine nature. It must be conceded then, that the essence of the Father and the Son is not one and the same."

Ingenious and specious at first view, I would readily concede this to be; but still I am unable to see that it settles the point in debate. The essence and attributes of God, so far as they are known to us, are *numerically one*, as we have already admitted. If Taylor means to extend the idea of *perfection* to *all* which belongs to the Godhead, then I would answer him merely by saying: 'It is essential to the perfection of the Godhead, that the distinction of Father and Son should exist; for otherwise there would be imperfection.' My right to make such an assertion, is just the same as his to make the assertion, that the distinction between Father and Son involved an imperfection in each. The very fact of *paternity* and *sonship*, (not literal), make up the perfection of the Father as Father, and of the Son as Son; and did not these exist, something would be wanting to complete the perfection of the Godhead. I acknowledge that this is assumption; but so is Taylor's statement; and an argument which

is built on an assumption, may surely be opposed by another which has the same basis.

My object in the present letter has been, thus far, to compare our views of the Trinity with those which you have ascribed to us; to show that we are not exposed to be justly charged with gross and palpable absurdity, or with "subverting the unity of the Godhead;" and to prove that the question, after all, whether there is in fact some distinction in the Godhead, must be referred solely to the decision of the Scriptures.

To them I shall appeal, as soon as I have made a few remarks on the *twofold* nature, which we ascribe to Christ. You say (p. 11),

"We (Unitarians) believe in the *unity of Jesus Christ.* We believe that Jesus is one mind, one soul, one being, as truly one as we are, and equally distinct from the one God. We complain of the doctrine of the Trinity, that not satisfied with making God three beings, it makes Jesus Christ two beings, and thus introduces infinite confusion into our conceptions of his character. This corruption of Christianity, alike repugnant to common sense and to the general strain of Scripture, is a remarkable proof of the power of a false philosophy in disfiguring the simple truth of Jesus."

You will admit that this is expressed in terms of strong confidence, and with no small degree of severity. Whether you have so clear a right to the former, and whether we are really deserving of the latter, every lover of truth will permit to be brought to the test of fair examination.

I am not certain that I have rightly apprehended your meaning, when you say that the twofold nature of Christ is "repugnant to common sense." Do you mean, that common sense may determine first, independently of revelation, that the doctrine cannot be true; and then maintain the impossibility that revelation should exhibit it? If so, then we are able to decide *a priori* and of ourselves what can be revealed, and what cannot; consequently what we may believe, and what we must disbelieve. It follows, then, that a

revelation is unnecessary, or rather that it is impossible, at least such an one as shall be obligatory upon our belief; for we have only to say, that our common sense decides against the propriety or the possibility of the things said to be revealed, and then we are at liberty to reject them.

But is this the proper sphere in which "common sense" should act? Is it not true, that common sense is limited to judging of the evidences that the Bible is of divine origin and authority; to establishing the rules of exegesis common and applicable to all languages and books; and finally, to directing a fair and impartial application of those rules, in order to determine what the original writer of any portion of the Scriptures designed to inculcate? Having once admitted, as you have, the divine authority of the Scripture in deciding all questions; and your obligation to submit to its decision, when you can understand the meaning of it by using the common rules of interpretation; how is it to be determined by common sense, whether Christ has two natures or one? Common sense may investigate the language of the inspired writers, and inquire what they have said; and if, by the sound rules of interpretation, it should appear that they have ascribed two natures to Christ, or have asserted that which unavoidably leads to the conclusion that he has two natures, then, it is either to be believed, or the authority of the writers is to be cast off. In rejecting any doctrine which the language of Scripture plainly teaches, common sense must cast off the divine authority of the Bible. To receive the Bible as a revelation from God, and yet to decide *a priori* what the Scriptures can and what they cannot contain, and then to make their language bend until it conform with our decision, cannot surely be a proper part to be acted by any sincere lover of truth and sober investigation.

When I say this, I must not be understood to mean, that our reason cannot exercise, in some cases, what I would call a *negative* power or right in regard to revelation. What our reason spontaneously and with absolute certainty decides to be a contradiction or an absurdity, (e. g. that a thing can *be* and

not be, at the same time and place and in the same respect, or that two and two make *five*, or that God is purely spiritual and yet at the same time material, and the like), cannot be a revelation from the Author of truth. It lies not within our will or power to command, or even force, assent to such propositions; and the evidence that they are not true is, by the very constitution of our minds, of much greater force and authority to us, than any evidence can possibly be, that there is a real revelation from God which contains such things. Cases of such a nature, I except of course from the tenor of my remarks in the preceding paragraph.

When you say, that the doctrine which teaches that Christ has two natures, is "repugnant to common sense," I must presume that you, who profess to admit the divine authority of the Scriptures, wish to be understood as meaning, that the rules of exegesis, applied by common sense, lead unavoidably to the conclusion that Christ has but *one* nature. If this be your meaning, what I have to say in reply, will be contained in my next letter.

In regard to the impossibility that Christ should possess *two* natures, and the absurdity of such a supposition, I have not much to say. If the Scriptures are the word of God, and do contain the doctrine in question, it is neither impossible nor absurd. Most certainly, if it be a fact that Christ possesses two natures, it is a fact with which natural religion has no concern; at least, of which it has no satisfactory knowledge. It can therefore decide neither for nor against it. It is purely a doctrine of revelation; and to Scripture only can we look for evidences of it. If the doctrine be palpably absurd and contradictory to reason, and yet is found in the Bible, then we must reject the claims of the Bible to inspiration and truth. But if the laws of interpretation do not permit us to avoid the conclusion that it is found there, we cannot, with any consistency, admit that the Scriptures are of divine authority, and yet reject the doctrine.

How shall any man decide, *a priori*, that the doctrine cannot be true? Can we limit the omniscient and omnipotent

God, by saying that the Son cannot be so united with human nature, so "become flesh and dwell among us," that we may recognize and distinguish, in this complex being, but *one person*, and therefore speak of but one? If you ask me *how* such a union can be effected, between natures so infinitely diverse as the divine and human, I answer, (as in the case above respecting the distinction in the Godhead), that I do not know *how* this is done; I do not undertake to define wherein that union consists, nor how it is accomplished. God cannot divest himself of his essential perfections, i. e. he is immutably perfect; nor could the human nature of Christ have continued to be a real human nature, if it had ceased to be subject to the infirmities, and sorrows, and (in a word) all the affections of such a nature, while he dwelt among men. In whatever way, then, the union of the two natures was effected, it was so brought about that it neither destroyed, nor essentially changed, either the divine or human nature.

Hence, at one time, Christ is represented as the Creator of the universe; and at another, as a man of sorrows, and of imperfect knowledge. (John 1: 1—18. Heb. 1: 10—12. Luke 22: 44. 2: 52.) If both of these accounts are true, he must, as it seems to me, be God omniscient and omnipotent; and still a man of imperfect and gradually increasing knowledge. If the latter were not true, then does it follow that his nature was not really and truly human. It is indeed impossible to reconcile these two apparently contradictory predicates, without the supposition of two natures. The simple question then is: Can they be joined or united, so that in speaking of them, we may say of the person who possesses them, that he is *God* or *man*, or that we may call him by one single name, and by this designate that he is of either or both of these natures? On this subject, the religion of nature says nothing. Reason, therefore, has nothing to say, which is decisive; for surely the reason of no finite being is competent to decide, that the junction of two natures in one person is either impossible or absurd.

One person, in the sense in which each of us is one, Christ

could not be. If we, with some of the fathers, make God the soul and Jesus of Nazareth the body of Christ, then we take away his human nature, and deny the imperfection of his knowledge. But may not God have been, in a manner altogether peculiar and mysterious, united to Jesus, without displaying at once his whole power in him, or necessarily rendering him, as a man, supremely perfect? In the act of creation, God does not put forth *all* his power; nor in the preservation of created things; nor in sanctification; nor does he bring all his knowledge into action, when he inspires prophets and apostles. Was it necessary that he should exert all his attributes to the full, when he was in conjunction with the human nature of Christ? In governing the world, from day to day, God does not surely exhaust his omnipotence, or his wisdom. He employs only so much as is necessary to accomplish the design, which he has in view. In his union with Jesus of Nazareth, the divine *Logos* could not, of course, be necessitated at once to put forth all his energy, or exhibit all his knowledge and wisdom. Just so much of it, and no more, was manifested, as was requisite to constitute the character of an all-sufficient and incarnate Mediator and Redeemer. When necessary, power and authority infinitely above human were displayed; when otherwise, the human nature sympathized and suffered like that of other men.

Is this impossible for God? Is there anything in such a doctrine, which, if found in the Bible, would afford an adequate reason for rejecting its claims to inspiration? For my own part, I cannot see either the impossibility or the absurdity of such a thing, How shall we limit the Deity, as to the ways in which he is to reveal himself to his creatures?

Why can we not find mystery within ourselves, which is as inexplicable as anything in the doctrine before us? We do not appropriate the affections of our minds, to our bodies; nor those of our bodies, to our minds. Each class of affections is separate and distinct. Yet we refer either to the *whole* man. Abraham was mortal; Abraham was immortal; these propositions are both equally true. He had a mortal

and an immortal part; yet both made but *one* person. How is it a greater mystery, if I say: Christ was God, and Christ was man? He had a nature human and divine. One person indeed, in the sense in which Abraham was, he is not. Nor is there any created object, to which the union of Godhead with humanity can be compared. But shall we deny the possibility of it, on this account? Or shall we tax with absurdity, that which it is utterly beyond our reach to scan? I shrink from such an undertaking, and place myself in the attitude of listening to what the voice of revelation may dictate in regard to this. It *becomes* us to do so, in a case like the present; it is meet to prostrate ourselves before the Father of lights, and say: 'Speak, Lord, for thy servants hear. Lord, what wilt thou have us to believe?'

You may indeed find fault with us, that we speak of *three persons* in the Godhead, where there is but *one nature;* and yet of but *one person* in Christ, where there are *two natures.* I admit that it is an apparent inconsistency in the use of language; and cannot but wish, on the whole, that it had not been adopted. Still, so great are the imperfections of language in relation to such a subject, that I cannot feel disposed to find much fault with it. What other word in our language would designate an *intelligent agent*, who possesses powers of distinct development? And does not the Bible, in applying *I, thou, he,* to the distinctions in the Godhead, afford some warrant for such a usage? But, leaving this and returning to the *one person* of Christ, I would say that it designates Christ as he appears to us in the New Testament, clothed with a human body, and yet acting (as we suppose) not only as being possessed of the attributes of a man, but also as possessing divine power. We see the attributes of human nature in such intimate conjunction with those of the divine, that we cannot separate the agents; at least, we know not where to draw the line of separation, because we do not know the manner in which the union is effected or continued. We speak therefore of one *person*, i. e. one agent. And when we say that the two natures of Christ are united in one per-

son, we mean to say that divinity and humanity are brought into such a connection in this case, that we cannot separate them, so as to make two entirely distinct and separate agents.

I may, on the whole, be permitted to say that the present generation of Trinitarians do not feel responsible for the introduction of such technical terms, in senses so diverse from the common ideas attached to them. They merely take them as they find them. For my own part, I have shown sufficiently that I have no attachment to them; I think them, on the whole, not to be very happily and warily chosen, and could rather wish they were dropped by general consent. But it is perhaps too late to expect this. Still I am persuaded, that, in most cases, such language rather serves to keep up the form of words without definite ideas; and I fear, that it has been the occasion of many useless disputes in the church. The *things* which are aimed at by using these terms, I would strenuously retain and defend; because I believe in the divine origin and authority of the Bible, and that its language, when fairly interpreted, does inculcate these things. Candour on your part, now, will certainly admit, that *things only* are worth any dispute. To be anxious for, and contend about, a mere matter of *logomachy*, is too trifling for a lover of truth.

Supplementary Note to p. 29.

To do anything like ample justice to the subject of the *Nicene Creed*, would require a little volume, instead of a brief note. A few leading hints may serve, in some measure, to explain the circumstances and the object of the Council of Nice. We cannot well understand the latter without some good knowledge of the former. The New Testament presents, according to its seemingly obvious import, the person of the Redeemer as both *divine* and *human*. "He was in the beginning with God and was God; he made all things; he upholds all things by the word of his power; he is God over all and blessed forever; he is God manifest in the flesh; he is the true God and eternal life." But he is also *man;* "there is one mediator between God and man, the *man* Christ Jesus; he took part in flesh and blood; he took on him the nature of the seed of Abraham; he was in all things made like to his brethren; he was tempted in all points as we are, and so can truly sympathize with us; he was made perfect through sufferings; he learned obedience by the things which he suffered; the exact day and hour of the destruction of Jerusalem, he could say that he knew not; he ate, drank, slept, laboured, journeyed, suffered from enemies and from exposure to wants and inconveniences; he prayed, wept, and agonized in the garden of Gethsemane; he was crucified, died, and was buried; he rose from the dead with a transformed and glorious body; he was the *Son of man*, descended from David in respect to the flesh; and in every point of view, (to sum up all in one word), he was a complete and perfect specimen of *humanity*.

One must take into view these plain things which seem to lie upon the very face of the New Testament, before he can get any proper clue to the history of the development of ecclesiastical doctrine respecting the *person* of Christ, either in ancient or in later times. Among the ancient fathers of the church, all the efforts to develop the mystery before us, may be classified by a distribution under three different heads. First, those who admitted a real human nature, but explained away the divine. Secondly, those who admitted a divine, at least a superior, nature, but explained away the human. Thirdly, those who sought to unite both. The conceptions and explanations, however, of

the latter, are very various; and many of them will not abide the test of a strict impartial scrutiny.

In respect to the two first classes, it is easy to see the influence which the Dualistic and Gnostic philosophy had upon them at an early period, which led them to regard *matter* and *spirit* as directly opposed to each other, and incapable of any real union in a being purely holy, such as Jesus was. Of course, those who were heartily convinced of this, denied the possibility of a real union of the divine and human, in the person of Jesus. To this class belonged, with different shades of opinion, such men as Basilides, Marcion, and Valentinian. The Spirit of God, or the Aeon Christ, merely waved or hovered over the person of Jesus; or the body of Jesus was only the phantasm of a body. Hence *Docetism*. The next step was easy, viz. that of *Ebionitism;* which denied that Christ had any thing more than a nature merely human. This was the opposite of Docetism in some respects, and yet both sprung from the same source, viz., from the belief that a nature both divine and human could not possibly be united in the same person. The one made a phantasm of the human nature, in order to avoid this union; the other excluded the divine.

Subsequently to these early heretical views, arose a scheme of *modification*, if I may so name it, by which the entire incompatibility of matter and spirit, or of divinity and humanity, was not maintained; but still, the *divine* in Jesus was explained as being only an *influence* of the Holy Spirit, or his *energy* exerted in a manner like that which was developed in the prophets of old, but more enlarged as to measure. To this rubric belong the views expressed in the Recognitions of Clement, by Paul of Samosata, (who called the influence of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus, ἔμπνευσις, i. e. inspiration), while he looked on that influence as differing merely in *degree*, not in kind, from that which rested on other holy men; and finally by Sabellius, who maintained that the emanation of the Godhead, which dwelt in Christ, was *temporary*. He sometimes named this emanation an ἀναπλασμὸς ἀνυπόστατος, i. e. an unsubstantial or impersonal new-modeling; or a πλατυνισμός, i. e. extension or widening; intending by this to designate his views of what was effected by the Spirit in respect to Jesus, and of the manner in which he supposed the Spirit to act. But the union of the divine and human in one person, although maintained by him, was yet, in his opinion, only *temporary*. His views, therefore, could not answer the seeming demands of the New Testament; and consequent-

ly they did not satisfy the churches in general. Sabellius differed widely from Paul of Samosata, his contemporary, in one respect; and in this he approached much nearer to what is called the orthodox view of the Trinity than the same Paul. The latter allowed of only a temporary and *partial* influence of the Spirit upon Jesus; the former maintained that the *fulness* of the Godhead dwelt in him, for the time being; but not that this constituted a union which was personal and perpetual.

It is easy to see from the history of the past, that, in this state of things, the churches in general were dissatisfied with the derogatory or degrading views that had been advanced, by various renowned men whom they had come to look upon as heretical, respecting the person of Christ. Some remedy was needed for this tendency of things in the churches. The leading fathers even of the third century sought, and as they believed found, one in quite a different hypothesis, viz. that of *subordination.*

As the *soul* is emphatically the man, and as Christ possessed a nature above the human, so in order to hold fast to his superior nature, they assigned to him *a soul of divine origin.* One Christ in two persons they could not admit. The proper human soul, therefore, must give place to the νοῦς or λόγος (the Word). On the other hand, the *sole supremacy* of the Father (μοναρχία) must not be given up, which had so long and so zealously been contended for. The result was, to assign to the Son a hypostatic or personal existence, higher than that of all other created beings—a hypostasis different from that of the Father, and also *subordinate* to him. To make out the grand point of the *personality* of the Logos, was the principal aim at that period, even among some of the fathers who are not regarded as heretical; because this was effectually to oppose the degrading opinion, that there rested upon Jesus merely a divine *influence;* an opinion like to that of Paul of Samosata, and of Sabellius. But in doing this, they were also to beware against dashing upon the rocks with such as denied the divine Unity, and made in effect three Gods. To avoid these rocks, they first asserted the personality of the Logos, and then *subordinated* him to the Father, as being derived from him and dependent on him.

With some shades of difference in minor things, and some diversities of representation, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Dionysius of Alexandria, adopted and maintained such views of the person of Christ. It was Origen who first fully and earnestly broached and taught the doctrine of *eternal generation.* With him, however, it had no very prominent meaning,

inasmuch as he maintained the eternal existence of the world, and of all human souls. The eternal existence of the latter, did not, in his view, prevent their being *dependent* on God. So the Logos, although eternal, might be *subordinate*. But the churches in general, while they held fast to the eternal generation of the Son, refused to admit the other kindred and similar views of Origen. Even the eternal generation of the Son they elevated to a higher significancy than Origen gave to it. According to him, the Son was only ὁμοιούσιος, i. e. of the *like* nature with the Father; but the churches came gradually to the view, that the Son was ὁμοούσιος, i. e. of the *same* nature with the Father. This was plainly suggested by Dionysius of Rome, in his dispute with Dionysius of Alexandria, who had, in order to maintain in full the subordination-theory, gone so far as to call the Son a ποίημα or κτίσμα, i. e. *something made* or *created*.

In those times of *subordinarian* views came forward Arius, with his dogmas. He not only went full length with the Subordinarians, as to the inferiority of the Son, but onward far beyond most of them; for he maintained that the Son was a being *created in time*, while they asserted that he was *begotten from eternity*. His famous ἦν πότε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν, i. e. there was a time when the Son was not, of course was an essential denial of his Godhead. Names of honour he gave to the Son in great abundance; he even called him Θεός, *God;* but after all a Θεὸς δεύτερος, i. e. a secondary God was meant, (which was all that he allowed), and this is neither more nor less than a mere creature.

The ferment occasioned by these views of Arius, when they were once spread abroad, became very great. The Nicene Council (A. D. 325) was the consequence. Here 318 bishops were present; and among these the then young and talented Athanasius stood highly prominent. In fact, that Council was swayed and guided by his eloquence and his logic.

It is evident enough from several expressions in the Nicene Creed (see p. 29 above), that the fathers of that Council meant to assert and maintain the true and real *Godhead* of Christ. "Begotten of the *substance* of the Father . . . very God of very God . . . of the same substance (ὁμοούσιος) with the Father," designate, if any language can designate, their decided views of the truly divine nature of the Son. And these views, after much and protracted opposition from the Arian party, at last so completely triumphed, that this party became in a manner extinct; at least, after a time, only solitary individuals, or a small party, opposed the declarations of the Nicene creed.

One point seemed then to be gained in the struggle. The *higher nature* of the Son was, as the Nicene fathers and their followers believed, fully asserted. How fared it, in the mean time, with the doctrine of his *real and complete humanity*? From Irenaeus downwards there had, for the most part, been more or less of the *claro-obscure* in relation to this. The Docetae, and all who in any way sympathized with them, employed expressions in relation to the subject before us, which indicated a distrust in the reality of Jesus' physical body, or else a belief that his soul was only an emanation from the Logos, or only the indwelling of the Logos himself, or of his Spirit. Some maintained, indeed, that all human souls were merely emanations from the Logos; and so, that Christ was like to the rest of men, except that he possessed a higher measure of emanated influence or substance. The Subordinarians generally asserted the *real humanity* of Christ; but with diversities of opinions about the manner in which the Logos stood related to the souls of men, and to the soul of Jesus in particular. In different individuals, the expression of opinions in relation to this subject, sometimes approached the emanation theory, sometimes the pantheistic, and sometimes they appear to savour even of Docetism. In general, minute explanation relative to the *human* soul of Jesus was rather carefully avoided, and many writers of name contented themselves with mere general assertions, or with rather unmeaning and inappropriate comparison drawn from material objects. In order to put an end to this state of things, the emperor Theodosius (in A. D. 381), a zealous advocate of the Nicene creed, called an ecumenical Council at Constantinople, who adopted again the Nicene creed, but with a variety of explanations and enlargements. They say, among other things, that "Jesus became incarnate through the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary . . . that he was crucified for us . . . that he was crucified, was buried, and rose from the dead . . . and is now seated at the right hand of the Father." (Symb. Nic. Constant., in Giesel. Chh. Hist. § 81, n. 23.)

Difficulties on the subject of Christ's humanity being still abroad among some of the churches, in A. D. 451 a new Council was summoned at Chalcedon, who seem to have gone as far as language could go, in asserting the fulness and perfection of both the divine and human natures in the person of Christ. "We teach," say they, "and order all to confess, that there is one and the same Son, one Lord Jesus Christ; that he is perfect in Godhead, and perfect in humanity; that he is truly God,

and truly man with a rational soul and body; that he is of the same substance with the Father in respect to his Godhead, and of the same substance with us in respect to his humanity, being in all things like to us, although without sin." They then go on to assert his generation by the Father before the world was, and his incarnation in later time; and then they add, that "the Son is Lord, only begotten, of *two natures* (φύσεων) without mixture . . . indivisible . . . by no means deprived of the difference of his natures by unity, but rather preserving the peculiarity of each nature, and combining them into one person and one hypostasis; not divided or distinguished into two persons, but remaining one and the same only begotten God the Logos, and Lord Jesus Christ." (Cited in Giesel. Chh. Hist. I. p. 240.)

The *fact* of two natures, complete and real, cannot well be expressed in language stronger or more definite than this. But the *fact* did not satisfy all minds. Many were prone to speculate. Hence the long and tedious controversies that followed, with the *Monophysite* party, i. e. those who maintained that Christ had but *one nature*, as well as one person. But at length the position of the Council of Chalcedon, as well as of Nice and Constantinople, obtained an almost universal predominance.

It is no part of my design to bring down these outlines to a later period. It is easy to see, that the full assertions made by the counsel of Chalcedon, in regard to matters of *fact*, without any attempt at explanation (except what is implied in the phrase *eternal generation*), would excite speculative and inquiring minds to ask: How can *two natures* be united in *one person?* Some, almost of course, would doubt the fact; others would insist on an explanation of the *modus in quo;* and others would endeavour, by a variety of definitions and argumentations, to vindicate the doctrine of the Council of Chalcedon.

Without any special reference to this Council, the state of things in regard to the questions which its Confession naturally elicited, has been, and still is, even at the present hour, much like what it was in times soon following the period of the Council. Neither a positive definition of *person*, nor an explanation of the *modus in quo* of the union of two natures, has ever been so made as to command general assent.

I shall pass by the efforts which mere philosophy has made to untie the *nodus*, and present the reader here with a number of attempts to define *personality*, as applied to the divine nature, made, in days that are past, by leading theologians on the continent of Europe.

Melancthon: Persona est substantia *individua*, intelligens, incommunicabilis, *non sustenta in alia natura.*

Buddaeus: *Personae* voce suppositum intelligens denotatur. Per suppositum, autem, substantia singularis completa, incommunicabilis, *non aliunde sustentata*, intelligitur. . . Tres personae in essentia divina . . . tres subsistentiae incommunicabiles, individuae naturae, hac ipsa manente indivisibili, indigitantur.

Baumgarten: Person means a *suppositum* which is the ground of certain actions peculiar to itself.

Morus: Persona significat ens per se, quod intelligit, et cum intellectu agit.

Reinhard: Persona est individuum subsistentiae incompletae, per se libere agens, et divinarum perfectionum particeps.

Gerhard: Persona est substantia individua, intelligens, incommunicabilis, quae non sustentatur in alio, vel ab alio . . . Non est modus subsistendi, sed est substantia certo charactere sive subsistendi modo insignita.

Sohnius and Keckermann: Hypostasis est *τρόπος ὑπάρξεως.*

Zanchius: Persona est ipsa essentia divina, proprio subsistendi modo distincta.

Turretin. Vox *personae* proprie concreta est non abstracta; quae, praeter formam quae est personalitas, subjectum etiam notat cum forma a qua denominatur.

Calvin: Subsistentia in essentia Dei, qua ad alios relata, proprietate incommunicabili distinguitur, [following Justin and Damascenus of ancient times.]

I do not translate these definitions, because I suppose those who will interest themselves in this inquiry, to be able to read the Latin, and thus to judge for themselves. I have a further reason. To *translate*, implies an understanding of what one professes to represent in another language. I certainly cannot say, that I feel able clearly to comprehend most of these definitions. Some of the leading ones represent *person* as the *mode of subsistence* in the Godhead; some join *substance* itself also with the mode.

The majority of those who undertake to define personality, represent person as a being or subsistence *who is not sustained by another, or does not subsist in or by another.* Now if the Father, as most of these theologians hold, does after all *communicate* personality to the Son and Spirit, how can the Son and Spirit be *persons* that do not subsist *in* or *by* another? If the Father is the *fons* or *principium*, the *πηγή* or *αἰτία*, of the personality of the Son and Spirit, (as he is so often called by the fathers), then

how is it that the persons of the Son and Spirit do not subsist *by* him? And if they depend on him for personality, (which is virtually maintained by the patristic, and expressly by the modern, theory of the Trinity), then how can their personality be conceived of as not existing *in* and *by* him? To avoid this difficulty we must say, that personality being once communicated to the Son and Spirit, it then becomes an independent attribute. But in this way the difficulty cannot be removed; for, first, the same writers do most of them declare, that personality is *incommunicable;* and secondly, it is not within the power of of the human mind even to conceive of a being that is independent as to any attribute, so long as that attribute has been bestowed by another, and is not self-existent.

Thus we see the difficulties which attend the school-logic system of definition and explanation, in respect to such a matter. And as for those who undertake to make out *personality* in the common way of separate consciousness, will, affections, etc., i. e. in the way in which we apply the word to men, I must believe that their views, considered in their *logical* consequences, necessarily lead on to *Tritheism.* For what shall we say of the idea of three *separate* consciousnesses, wills, affections, etc.? Can a *spiritual* being, i. e. can the *Μονάς*, be even supposed to exist without a consciousness, will, affections, etc.? Does not his *moral* character, do not his moral attributes, consist essentially in these? And if these are not, as theologians aver, in reality to be distinguished from the *substance* or *essence* of the Godhead; and if this substance (as all agree) is *numerically* one; then how are we to make out three separate wills, affections, etc.? Or is it that the *Μονάς* is God, without any will or affections? Or if they belong to him, then does the Father as one person have a separate will, and the Son and Spirit as second and third persons have each a separate will? And are we, in this way of reasoning, to make out *four* separate consciousnesses, affections, etc., in the Godhead? What is all this in reality, but going back to an absolute *plurality* in the Godhead, and maintaining nothing in effect but mere *specific* unity?

To say that declarations like those in John and Paul, viz. that *the Logos created all things*, and that *God made the world by his Son*, must prove a *distinct* will of Son and Father, amounts to the same thing as to say, that they must prove the existence of distinct essential attributes. In the like way the Arians say, that the declaration of John, "*and the Logos was* WITH *God*," proves that he could not be the same as God, but must be a dis-

tinct and different being; else how could he be *with* him? But here one is tempted to exclaim: When shall we come fully to learn, that in speaking of the Godhead as it is in itself, human language (as now formed, and indeed in any way in which it could be formed), must be altogether inadequate to a full and exact description? When distinctions in the Godhead itself are once admitted, and distinctions that pertain to an *intelligent rational* nature, in what other way can we speak and write respecting them, than the biblical writers have done? I know of none. The imperfection of human language forbids it. And it would seem to be quite as rational and scriptural to maintain that God is *limited in his presence* and is *local*, because the Scripture represents him as *ascending* and *descending*, as it would to maintain three *separate* wills, affections, etc., of the Trinity, because God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. There is a reason or ground in his very being, for his developments as Trinity; else they would not be made. These developments necessarily pre-suppose some distinctions belonging to his nature; but that these amount to *separate* consciousnesses, wills, affections, etc., would be a perilous position to assume. Perilous; because when once assumed, *theoretical* tritheism at least becomes logically inevitable. A man may contradict and disclaim this, I well know, in words; and he may sincerely and truly reject it in *intention;* but the inevitable *logical* result of his position must be theoretical Tritheism. What more distinctive mark is there of three different persons among men, and in a human sense, than that they have separate consciousnesses, wills, and affections? Perilous, I say again, because it assumes the position, that we know enough concerning the nature of the distinctions in the Godhead, thus to predict of it what amounts to an essential part of distinctive individuality among men. Can we deliberately take, and endeavour to maintain, such a position as this?

What God has done in developing himself we know from Scripture. That a distinction is necessarily implied by these developments, from the very structure of our minds we cannot avoid admitting. But to extend this in such a way as to make out a *metaphysical* definition of persons in the Godhead, (which of course must imply a definite knowledge of the particular and distinctive nature of *person* in it), seems to me to be treading on forbidden ground. Is it not advancing beyond the boundaries of human knowledge?

I can see no contradiction, no absurdity, nothing even incongruous, in the supposition, that the divine nature has manifested

itself as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, while its essence and essential attributes are and have always been numerically one and the same; for that they are and have been so, all the leading Trinitarians agree. Nor is it within the compass of any effort that my mind can make, to conceive how numerical *sameness* of substance and attribute, is compatible with distinct consciousnesses, wills, and affections? What are these last but *essential* attributes of the *Μονάς* himself? And if so, how can these very same attributes be numerically three? If the Bible asserts this, then I will yield at once; because I shall then take it for granted, that my darkened and feeble understanding is the source of my difficulty. But if the Bible (as I verily believe) does neither assert nor imply it; then it must be shown to be possible and consistent, before it can be entitled to our faith.

It would seem, that after all which has been done to show the high and spiritual and incomprehensible nature of the divine Being, and the inadequacy of human language fully to describe him as he is, we are yet called to argue, in order to satisfy the minds of some, that such expressions as *the Logos being* WITH *God*, and *God's creating the worlds by his Son*, are not to be taken and reasoned from, just as if they had been employed in respect to known individual and entirely separate beings. If God communicates his *whole substance* to the Son, as the Nicenians, and most of the Trinitarians in modern times (who treat of and believe in eternal generation) actually maintain, how then can there be *separate* consciousnesses, wills, and affections? Or are we to suppose these to exist independently of the substance or essence of the Godhead?

In a word, it is only when we come adequately to learn the imperfection of human language, and the difficulties which attend communications by it respecting distinctions in the Godhead, that we shall be satisfied how inconclusive all reasoning must be, which is founded on deductions drawn from the language of Scripture, when we interpret that language just as if it had relation to finite intelligences who are altogether distinct and separate beings. What cannot be proved, if we are to take such liberties as these? Surely the Anthropomorphites are not to be confuted, when such a position is taken. It seems to be quite as cogent an argument to say, that when hands, eyes, feet, heart, etc., are ascribed to the Godhead by the sacred writers, they can mean nothing, unless we give to their language a literal, or at least a *quasi*-literal, meaning, as it is to say that *the being with God*, and *God's creating the worlds by his Son* can

mean nothing, unless it have a literal, or *quasi*-literal, meaning. In the first case, we reject the exegesis of the Anthropomorphites, because we consider it absolutely certain that God is a simple spiritual being. In the second, then, the admitted *numerical unity* and *sameness of substance* and essential attributes in the Godhead, would seem to stand arrayed, with equal strength, against a supposition which would make three numerically distinct essential attributes; for such must be three distinct and separate consciousnesses, wills, and affections. At least, it is not in the power of my mind to conceive that these two things, when put together, do not prove an absolute contradiction.

Some of my readers may perhaps be now inclined to urge me to give my own views of *personality*. I have already declined an attempt at formal definitions, averring my belief to be, that *person* indicates some distinction in the Godhead, the positive nature of which we do not understand, and therefore cannot define. I have no objection, however, to saying what I think *it is not*, i. e. to giving in some respects a *negative* definition. If it be asked, then: Is *personality essence* or *attribute*? Not the first, one might answer; for essence in the Godhead is numerically one and the same. Not the second in an *essential* and *fundamental* sense; because, as we have seen, all the attributes that are of this description, belong to the one substance or essence of the Godhead. 'But if *personality* be neither substance nor attribute,' some one may exclaim, 'then can it be anything, or have any existence at all?'

My answer is, that this last question is founded on some misconception, or at least imperfect conception, of the positions just laid down. God may have properties or attributes, which we do not consider as *exclusively* peculiar to Deity, and which do not of themselves distinguish him from created beings. Thus we may say, his nature is *spiritual;* and so is that of angels, and of that part of man which is made in his image. Such attributes, from their very nature, do hardly admit of *gradation* in the common sense. Other attributes he has, some of which are distinctive or peculiar to him principally in respect to degree; such as wisdom, justice, goodness, etc. Others he has, which are entirely and altogether peculiar and appropriate; such as self-existence, eternity absolute, immutability, etc. Now personality cannot be put among these two latter classes of attributes; because they belong, as nearly all agree, to the *Μονάς* or essential substance of the Godhead. If then personality belong to the Godhead, it must belong to it, as it would seem, not

as *essential* to divinity, but as in some respect or other *modal*, or at least as an attribute which holds (in a logical arrangement) a secondary and not a primary place.

So Turretin himself concedes: Persona differre dicetur ab essentia, non *realiter*, id est *essentialiter*, ut res et res, sed *modaliter*, ut *modus a re*; Quaest. 27. § 3. That is, *person* may be said to differ from *essence*, not really, i. e. essentially, as thing and thing, but *modally*, as mode from thing.

It is possible then, that there may be in the Godhead some distinctions which do not consist in a difference of substance; and which moreover do not consist in the high and peculiar and exclusive attributes of that substance which constitute Godhead, but which are, as Turretin avers, *modal*; or they may be of such a nature that we have no language to describe them, and no present ability even to comprehend them if they could be described. Can it be strange that the uncreated and self-existent Godhead should have some such properties as these? The impossibility or even the improbability of this, no man is able to prove.

There may then be distinctions in the Godhead, that lie beyond all our present logical and metaphysical conception or power of definition; distinctions which are co-eternal with the Godhead itself; and which, though neither essence or essential attribute in the highest sense, may still have an existence that is real and true.

Any theory which derives the essence of Godhead in the Son and Spirit from the first person, seems to strike at the root of *equal power and glory* among the three persons of the Godhead, and moreover virtually to deny the *self-existence* and *independence* of the second and third persons. Any theory which makes the *modus existendi*, i. e. the subsistence or personality, of the Son and Spirit to depend on the first person and to be bestowed by him, in like manner virtually denies the self-existence and independence of the second and third persons; for how can they be of that self-existent substance which is numerically one and the same with that of the Father, and yet this substance have no *modus subsistendi* of its own? How can substance exist without a mode of existing? Or if you say, that 'there are different and many modes of subsisting belonging to the same essence, and that personality is only one of them; or that other modes of existence may be necessarily attached to the divine substance which is one, but that *this* may be something which is *bestowed* on the second and third persons, or *imparted* to them;'

then I have several difficulties to suggest which seem to lie in the way of such a supposition. (1) If the Father, Son, and Spirit, are in *all* respects equal in power and glory, how can the Father have a power to bestow personality on the Son and Spirit, when they have no such power in reference to him? (2) If the Father has a personality bestowed by none, this must be the result of the substance which he possesses, and a modification of it which is inseparably connected with its very nature; but inasmuch as the Son and Spirit possess numerically the *same* substance, how is it that this same modification of personality, does not attach also to the divine substance which is in them?

Person, moreover, cannot be such a division in the Godhead, as makes separate and merely co-ordinate consciousnesses, wills, affections, etc.; for this brings us to admit a principle that would consist with all the polytheism which we can imagine to exist, or to be possible, among divine natures; or else it reduces us to make the impossible supposition, that one and the same identical spiritual substance has three distinct sets of attributes, which in all respects are again one and the same with each other, or at least exactly alike.

In fact, any definition of personality in the Godhead which represents person to be *ens per se* or *substantia individua non sustentata in alia natura*, as most of the definitions above given do either assert or imply, seems plainly and substantially to infringe on the idea that there is but one and numerically the same substance in the Godhead. I am not able to see why it does not clearly involve a logical contradiction.

One and all of these modes of Trinitarianism then, it would seem, must be abandoned by the considerate believer of the present day. Protestants have always professed themselves at liberty to pass in review Creeds and Confessions and Systems, venerable for antiquity, and long defended by eloquence and learning and even force. But let them not abuse this sacred privilege. Let them not reject anything merely because it is old, or because it has been defended by arguments that will not abide the day of scrutiny; nor receive anything merely because it is new and striking, and looks fair, and promises to relieve some of the difficulties that accompanied the older doctrine.

Will it be said now by those who are opposed to the doctrine of the Trinity, that nothing certain can be made out in respect to it, either from the ancient Christian fathers, or the modern schools of theology; and that, from my own showing, it appears

to have been an ever varying and obscure and indefinable doctrine, and therefore cannot be important to the Christian, much less essential to his salvation? The answer to this suggestion is not difficult. I ask, first, is it not true, that the great body of the Christian churches, in every age, have regarded Christ as *truly divine*, and considered him as the proper object of worship, and the Being to whom their prayers might be properly directed? I admit, for I have already shown, that the metaphysical speculations of every age have been more or less varying, and sometimes in certain repects even opposite—speculations respecting the *modus* of the connection between Father, Son, and Spirit, the personality of each, the relation of the higher and lower natures in the person of Christ, and in regard to some other things of the like kind. But may not men make endless mistakes, and exhibit a countless variety of opinions, when they undertake to specificate and define that which in its very nature is beyond the reach of definition? And may not the mistakes or errors which they commit, pertain altogether more to philosophical views about the *modus* of things, than to their *essence* or reality? How easy it would be to show the like state of things in regard to most of the objects of intellectual or natural philosophy! It is sufficient to mention two simple things, in the existence and leading properties of which every rational being now alive on earth believes, who is in possession of common sense and has the use of his faculties—I mean *light* and *heat*. But is there any end of the disputes about these? Or is there like to be an end? It is not even yet decided, whether these are *material* substances or not, nor in what way the sensation of light in us is produced. It is not decided whether the sun radiates both, in such a manner as must attach itself to subtile and attenuated fluid substances, or whether his presence in the sky only occasions an action in the atmosphere, or in the empyreal fluid, which terminates in affecting our senses with the perception of light and heat. But is any man deterred by the endless disputes in relation to these subjects, from believing in the *reality* of light and heat? So far as I know, there is not, and never has been, even one.

Why now should the ever varying efforts of men to define the *personality* of the Godhead, and to define the *manner* in which the person of Christ is constituted, prevent our believing in what the Scriptures have asserted to be a matter of *fact*, viz., that Christ is both God and man? To show *a priori* that such a fact involves an *impossibility* or an *absurdity*, is out of question.

If we adhere to the authority of revelation, then we must simply inquire: What does revelation say? We need not—should not—go to the ever varying phases of the doctrine of the Trinity, as taught by the Fathers and by the Schools, in hope of learning what cannot be taught by men, because it is beyond their reach. And if nearly, or (to a certain extent) quite, all the diversities of opinion that exist, have respect to things which are beyond the boundaries of human knowledge, why should this be made a ground for rejecting the *substance* of that in which the churches have been and are agreed? That substance, as it appears to me after not a little investigation of the history of the doctrine in question, seems to be, that *Christ possesses a truly divine nature*, which makes him a proper object of worship, of homage, and of prayer. It lies on the face of past history, that the Christian church was never, for any considerable length of time, satisfied with anything which they regarded as amounting to less than this. The New Testament always stood in the way of theories below this, and brought the church out, sooner or later, against them.

There cannot be any reasonable doubt, in respect to the unaffected reverence and homage paid to Christ by such men as Origen and Eusebius of Cesarea. Yet they held the doctrine of eternal generation in the *homoiousian* form, i. e. they held only that the Son was *like* to the Father. For us, this sentiment would throw an insuperable obstacle in the way of homage and worship to him, as a Being who is truly divine. But not so to them. Their philosophy forbade not the idea of *emanation* from God, and the emanation of a being *like* to him, but of course dependent on him. Yet here an escape from maintaining the decided inferiority of the Son, was designedly provided for, by holding that the generation or emanation of the Son was *eternal*, and therefore he must be divine. With their *philosophy* we cannot possibly agree; but their *real theology* is less discrepant from ours, than we may be inclined to imagine.

It is plain enough, that, when the churches had become alarmed with the tendency of Origen's speculations, and especially when this alarm had become almost a consternation, at the period in which Arius broached his famous problem: *There was a time when the Son was not;* and also asserted that *he was merely created before the world began*, (a view much below that of Origen); it is plain, I say, that the church spoke out its convictions at Nice, so as to contradict both Origen and Arius, although Arius was the person mainly and immediately aimed at in their

Creed. The *Homoiousy* of Origen and Arius is exchanged for *Homoousy*, i. e. *like substance* with the Father is exchanged for *same substance;* the *created* or *made* of Arius is exchanged for *eternally begotten.* This puts aside at once both Origenism and Arianism, and makes in fact a very important advance towards the scripture doctrine of the Trinity—as great an one as could with any good reason be expected, at the commencement of the fourth century.

But still, with all the veneration which I feel for the Christian fathers, and all which in addition to this is naturally attached to a Creed so long and so widely diffused and honoured, I must confess myself to be entirely at a loss, how an intelligent Trinitarian, of the present time, can consent to admit this Creed as the leading Symbol of a Christian confession of faith. First, as a summary of Christian doctrine it is essentially defective; for it contains little else but a contradiction of the peculiarities of Arius. All the leading and fundamental doctrines of grace are omitted. Secondly, it asserts a doctrine, viz. that of *eternal generation*, which we of the present day, taught as we have been in respect to the *essential* attributes of Godhead, cannot possibly admit, without at the same time admitting, that the Son is neither *self-existent* nor *independent.* But a being destitute of these two attributes we cannot regard as "*God over all* and blessed forever." I have no apprehension that the Nicene fathers meant to assert or concede the *inferiority* of the Son, or to imply a doubt of his true divinity. But, as I have already said, their metaphysics (such as they were) permitted them to believe in *derived* Godhead, and yet to make it *homoousian* with its source! But in this calculation the attributes of self-existence and independence were overlooked. A being derived, begotten, emanated, or created, cannot, even in imagination, be supposed to be self-existent or independent. All that is said of mysteriousness, and of the inconceivably super-natural, in respect to the *mode* of generation, does not touch the point in question. The favourite simile of Tertullian, and after him of all the orthodox fathers and even of the writers of modern times, is that of *radiance* proceeding from the sun. 'It is,' say they, '*coeval* with the sun, and existed the first moment that the sun had an existence; and moreover, it is part of the sun, or of the same nature with him, and yet the emission of it does not diminish or alter the sun.' But on closer examination, we find that this comparison will not abide the test; not even as to *time.* It comes near to illustrating the eternity of the Son's generation, but does not reach the mark. If the

sun is the *cause* of radiance, then did the cause *precede* the effect. As to the rest; does not radiance *depend upon* the sun, which is its proper cause? And is the Logos *caused* and *dependent*, and yet God supreme? And when it is said that radiance is *homoousian* with the sun itself; how can it be true, that the cause of radiance and radiance itself are the *same*? Moreover, if radiance is material, then does the sun suffer a change by emitting it. If it is not material, then it depends on *successive* influences of the sun. Of course, there is no one point of the comparison which will abide the test. It must be true, that the necessary concomitant of generation, emanation, or creation, is *dependence on* the being which begets, or emanates, or creates. Dependence, however, and self-existence are direct opposites.

These considerations seem so plain and obvious, that I must confess it to be a matter of surprise to me, that any Trinitarians of the present day should adopt and defend the Nicene Creed, as part of their profession of faith.

I say nothing here of the so called *Athanasian* Creed; because it is generally admitted, as I suppose, that there is no satisfactory proof that Athanasius was the author of it. Dr. Waterland ascribes it to Hilary, bishop of Arles. It was first received in France, about A. D. 850; in Spain and Germany, about 1030. In some parts of Italy it was current about 960; at Rome, it was admitted in 1014. Many churches, viz. the Lutheran, the Episcopal (of Europe), and others, receive and retain it. It is more minute and circumstantial than the Nicene; but it leaves the main difficulty, viz. *derivation* and *dependence*, unremoved. Any Creed, which predicates these of the Logos or divine nature of Christ, cannot be mine. It is far below what I call *orthodoxy*, at the present time. We cannot take such a position, while enlightened views of the true nature of Godhead are widely diffused, without incurring the certain risk of teaching what is indeed somewhat in advance of Arianism, but still, as to the two most distinctive attributes of the Godhead, viz. *self-existence* and *independence*, it occupies common ground with the same heresy. For surely it differs from it, in respect to the matter now before us, only in the terminology which it employs.

I must now beg leave further to remark, that I know of no one topic in theology, which has been more abused, whether in the way of reasoning, or of appealing to the ancient fathers, than that of the Trinity. Some reason from all declarations respecting this doctrine, just as if language concerning it were employed in its ordinary sense as applied to finite and created be-

ings. This has been usual among Antitrinitarians, in all ages. The appeals to the ancient Christian fathers have been endless; and unfortunately, all parties can find something in them, which they may manage to convert to their own use. Strictness of definition in regard to such a subject, among writers so little guided by the logic of Aristotle, or any other logic, as the fathers were, is out of all reasonable question. There is not one of them, in which we cannot find at least seeming discrepancies and contradictions. This lays them open to abuse and perversion. Then oftentimes their notions of the Godhead seem to be so discrepant from ours, particularly in regard to the pure *spirituality* of his nature, that what they sometimes say is capable of a meaning apparently very strange, and at variance with the general tenor of their language.

These are sources enough for originating mistakes, and to render the ground of the fathers rather a hazardous one to be trodden by a partisan or sectarian. Dr. Priestley has shown, on one side, and Waterland, as I think, on the other, not only what opposite conclusions may be drawn from the same general sources, but how almost anything and everything can be made out of hasty or not well digested expressions, when one sets out to carry a point at all adventures, and moreover does not enter, with any good degree of success, into the spirit of the age when the works of the fathers were written. A more incondite and unfair book than Priestley's History of Early Opinions, is rarely to be met with. Dr. Priestley was much more appropriately employed in the *chemical* than in the *patristical* laboratory.

Among the many hundreds of books, which have professed to give the views of the Christian fathers respecting the doctrine of the Trinity and the dignity and person of the Son of God, I know of but one, which is not a mere compilation of fragments and insulated and scattered parts. The idea of a regular order in the topics, and the unfolding of a principle, which may be called the *trunk* from which limbs have been continually shooting off; the conception of a general unity, with demarcations of specific variety; seem to have entered thoroughly into the mind of no writer, previous to the recent admirable Essay of Prof. J. A. Dorner, of the university of Tübingen, in his *History of the Unfolding of the Doctrine respecting the Person of Christ.* To him I am much indebted for some of the views correspondent with such a plan, in the present Note.*

* I take great pleasure in adding, that it appears by the catalogue of books in Germany, that he is enlarging, filling out, and completing the

One thing I cannot forbear noting in respect to the work of Dorner. This is, that a large portion of his book is occupied with a *Critique* on all the various schemes of philosophy in Germany, which have attracted any special notice, so far as they are concerned with the subject of *Christology*. Being an adept in this branch of science, and one of the very highest order, it is no wonder that his book, containing such a masterly *Critique* as it does, has attracted the notice and commanded the applause of all. The justice of his criticisms is felt; for otherwise they could not command such general homage. He who wishes to learn how philosophy, for the last half century, has modified *Christology*, may gratify his curiosity by reading his book. The various systems of Wolfius, Kant, Jacobi, Fichte, Schelling, Schleiermacher, Marheineke, Rosenkrantz, Göschel, Conradi, and Hegel, specially of the latter, pass in review, and the ruling principles of each are exhibited and criticised. Will not the reader, who is unacquainted with these, be somewhat surprised to learn, that, from Schelling downward, all assume the doctrine of a *Trinity* as true, and as the basis of their system? Specially does *the union of the* DIVINE *and* HUMAN constitute a leading element in the Hegelian philosophy. Indeed its advocates, such as are religiously inclined, boast of its having brought about a complete union between the Scriptures and reason, in respect to this leading point of Christology. Accordingly we find Dr. Nitzsch of Bonn and Weisse of Leipsic (a leading Hegelian there), in the same No. of the Quarterly *Studien und Kritiken*, both defending the doctrine of the Trinity, against the semi-Arian views of F. Lücke; the first, in the Old School and even Thomas Aquinas style; the second, after the manner of the new philosophy. What a change! How does time trample upon violent party effusions, and refuse to listen to the voice of ridicule and contempt! The *Rationalists* routed and dispersed by the *Hegelians!*

It would be aside from my present purpose, to aim at making an *exposè* of the Hegelian *Christology*. Dorner is the only German whom I have been able to follow and understand, in his view of this matter. His thoughts are so straightforward and logical and discriminating, without being overloaded with technical phraseology, that a patient reader, somewhat versed in such matters, may comprehend and follow him.

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admirable plan which he sketched in the first edition of his work (one small 8vo. vol.); inasmuch as a *first* volume has already been published, which, as it indicates a second, promises of course a great enlargement of the original work.

But after all, what a *Trinity* does Hegelism make! It finds no difficulty, indeed, in bringing together *God* and *man*, the divine nature and the human, because, as it assumes, God is developed as a *conscious* being, i. e. as having personality, only in a human nature. He could not be God in full without us, any more than we can be perfect men without him. It would seem according to this philosophy, therefore, to be proper to say, that the divine nature is human, and the human nature is divine; we are God, and God is we. Indeed the Hegelians make this fundamental in their system. But why the only *perfect* man was Jesus Christ, and why other men are not perfect since God developes himself in them, is what the philosophy in question does not satisfactorily solve. Other great defaults in the Hegelian doctrines are pointed out by Dorner; and in such a way as to show, that these doctrines fall immeasurably below the standard of the Scriptures, in respect to the *God-Man* who is the Redeemer of our fallen race. In effect the sinner is taught, (if indeed as a *sinner* he is taught at all), that God has as much need of him as he of God. In what way a *broken* and *contrite* spirit is to be produced, by means such as these, remains practically and theoretically a problem, which it would be difficult to solve.

I am not among the number of those who suppose that Hegel's direct design was to overthrow Revelation and Christianity. But I am, at the same time, most fully satisfied, that he regarded Revelation with so little respect, with reference to any principles of philosophy, that he would never have modified a single thought or expression out of deference to it. His Pantheism makes it easy to believe in a sort of incarnation. His God, so far as he concedes that there is any, is an *impersonal* being, except as he is dependent on us for temporary personal development. And again, when he has fully united with us, we lose our personality as human beings, as a matter of course. There is no doubt of the great talent—of the highly discriminating powers of Hegel, or of his extensive learning in the department of philosophy. But to make such abstractions a part of the religion of the great mass of men—it would be more difficult than it would to convert them into Newtons and Laplaces.

Dorner himself, who cherishes the highest admiration for the talents of Hegel, confesses, or rather shows, that 'the *God-Man* of his system is *essentially* different from that of the Gospel; that the reconciliation (or atonement) is a bare mediation of God with himself, in order that he may become conscious of himself in another mode of existence, i. e. in the world, (so that in effect

a *duality* is virtually assumed in God); that the *forgiveness of sin* is only a religious mode of expression intended to designate the moral freedom of man; that men have a continued power of redeeming themselves without the mediation of Christ; that all men are essentially of the same nature and rank as Christ; that men are only temporary phenomena, into which the divine energy enters, and through which it penetrates, in order that it may attain to a consciousness of itself; and finally, that the perfect unity of the divine and human, in Christ, in a peculiar manner, is neither supposed nor supposable, nor can his development be regarded as sinless.' In a word, the incarnation amounts only to a satisfactory proof, that the union of God and man is possible, which man in his natural state is inclined to disbelieve.

Such are some of the results of *Hegelian* Christology. Truly "the world by wisdom know not God." And I may add, from the deepest convictions of my soul, that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men." In the spirit and with the language of a penitent of ancient days, who hastened to the sepulchre of Jesus, where she feared that all her hopes had been buried, I would approach this charnel-house of vital Christianity and exclaim: "They have taken away my Lord, . . . and I know not where they have laid him!" So far as this philosophy is concerned, that is all I could have to say. But no grave can hold the mighty Conqueror of death. He is not there, he has risen; he has ascended on high, led captivity captive, is distributing gifts to men, and is and will be crowned and adored as *Lord of all*, by those "who have been redeemed to God *by his blood*, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

It is time to close this protracted Note. I cannot do this, however, without adding a word on the position which, as it seems to me, all evangelical churches ought to take, in reference to the doctrine of the Trinity. (1) They should insist on it, that, according to the Scriptures, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are one God, and but one, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. (2) They should maintain, that in the Lord Jesus Christ, the *divine* and *human*, in the perfection and fulness of both, are united. (3) They ought not to exact from any one, professing the Christian faith, that he should adopt any definition or description of the word *person*, as applied to the Godhead or to the Lord Jesus Christ, which mere philosophy or theology has made out, but which is not taught in the Scriptures. (4) If I might be permitted freely to speak my own opinion, I would further say, that I

should regard the omission of the word *person* in all *church-creeds* as quite desirable, in order to avoid fruitless and endless controversy and misunderstanding. If any one is startled at this, I take shelter under a name, which, although once cast out, and abhorred by many, and often covered with reproach, now commands, among nearly all parties of the intelligent, unaffected reverence and admiration; I mean the name of CALVIN. In his Institutes, I. 13. 5, he says: "Utinam sepulta essent *Nomina*, constaret modo haec inter omnes fides: *Patrem et Filium et Spiritum Sanctum esse unum Deum*; i. e. My wish is, that all *names* might be buried, provided this article of faith might be agreed upon by all: THE FATHER AND SON AND HOLY SPIRIT ARE ONE GOD."

I need not say how many anxious minds would be calmed by the adoption of such a noble and scriptural sentiment, and by agreeing upon it as one of the conditions of Christian confidence and communion. Nor need I say, how much unskilful handling of this great and difficult topic would be prevented, nor how large a proportion of objections against Trinitarianism would be removed. All this lies upon the face of the matter. How was it with the churches, before the Council of Nice? They had *no Creed* drawn up in any formal manner. And nearly all of the martyr-spirit, most of the enlarged success in converting heathen, and high attainments in the spirit of brotherly concord, as well as all the conspicuous Christian graces, belong to the earliest period of the church. *Have we nothing to learn from facts like these?* My belief is, that the churches must go back, and make more of the BIBLE, and less of Creeds, in order to revive the spirit of the primitive ages of Christianity. When they shall be as anxious to promote brotherly harmony, and kindness, and true liberality, as they have for a long time been to inflame sectarian zeal, and increase the causes of dissension by sectarian creeds, and to treat with severity and contempt or reproach those who differ from them in matters unessential, then will the world once more be constrained to say: *See how these Christians love one another!* Then, to use the last words of the adorable Saviour, "will they all be one;" and then, (but not till then), "will the world believe that Christ is sent by the Father."

LETTER III.

Reverend and Dear Sir,

My great object, hitherto, has been to show, that the real question at issue between us, in regard to a distinction in the Godhead and the divinity of the Saviour, cannot be decided independently of the Scriptures. There is no such absurdity or inconsistency in either of these doctrines, as will justify us in rejecting them without investigation. The question whether they are true or not, belongs *entirely* and *purely* to Revelation. If you admit this, then the simple question between us is: What does Revelation teach? We are agreed that the Bible is the word of God; that whatever "Christ taught, either during his personal ministry, or by his inspired apostles, is of divine authority." We are agreed as to *principles* of interpretation, in most things that are of any importance. We both concede, that the principles by which all books are to be interpreted, are those which apply to the interpretation of the Bible; for the very plain reason which you have given, that when God condescends to speak and write for men, it is according to the established rules of human language. What better than an enigma would the Scriptures be, if such were not the fact? An *inspired interpreter* would be as necessary to explain, as an inspired prophet or apostle was to compose, the books of Scripture.

From this great and fundamental principle of all interpretation, it results that the grammatical analysis of the words of any passage, i. e. an investigation of their meaning in general, of their syntactical connection, of their idiom, of their relation to the context, and of course of their *local* meaning; must be the essential process, in determining the sense of any text or part of Scripture. On this fundamental process depends the interpretation of all the classics, and of all other books; from this result laws which are uniform, and which cannot be violated, without at once plunging into the dark

and boundless field of conjectural exegesis. Whatever aid I may get from other sources to throw light upon my text, I cannot dispense with the aid which these rules will afford. These rules are founded in the simple fact, that every writer wishes and expects to be understood by his contemporaries, and therefore uses language as they do. We presume this of the sacred writers; and apply to them, as to the classics, (excepting that we allow for the Hebrew-Greek idioms in the New Testament), the common and universal rules of grammatical interpretation.

Admitting then the fundamental principles of grammatical interpretation to be the best and surest guide to the sense of any writer, I must never supersede these, by *supposing* or *conjecturing* that some peculiar principles or motives influenced that writer. If it can be *proved* that he was under the influence of these; or if this can be even rendered probable; of course such a fact must have its proper influence upon the interpretation of him. But until this can be shown, the *general* laws of grammatical interpretation are our only guide. Nor can we violate the obvious principles of grammatical interpretation, for the sake of vindicating from inconsistency, absurdity, or contradiction, any author, even a scriptural one.

I must here explain myself, however, in order to prevent mistake in regard to my meaning. The Scriptures certainly stand on different ground, from that on which any other book rests, on account of their claim to be received as a Revelation from God. What other book can plead well authenticated miracles, for its support; or can produce declarations of a prophetic nature that have been fulfilled; or can glory in such an exhibition of the principles of piety and virtue—of love to God, and of benevolence and beneficence to men? Just in proportion, then, as these evidences influence my mind to believe that the Bible is of divine origin, in the same proportion it becomes improbable to me that this Bible contains absurdities, errors, or contradictions. When any *apparent* error or contradiction attracts my attention, I hesitate to pronounce it such as it appears to be. My reason for so

doing is, the strength of the evidence in favour of its divine origin; which is such that I must do violence to my convictions, if I admit that the book contains either what is erroneous or contradictory. I am then slow to attribute, in any case, such a sense to words in the Scriptures, as would make a passage speak either absurdity or contradiction. But if, after all the light which I could gain, it should appear still to be a *plain case*, that there is either absurdity or contradiction in the sacred text; then I must find a different reading; or give up the passage; or renounce the whole book. I may, moreover, merely suspend an opinion, as to *doubtful* cases. My convictions respecting the nature and design of the holy Scriptures; the imperfection of my knowledge; diffidence in myself—all *demand* that I should act in this manner. But in any *clear* case; where the meaning of a sacred writer, or what he originally designed to say, can be *definitely* ascertained by the common laws of interpretation, and it appears that this meaning is erroneous, or contradicts some other passage; I have no right to put a constructive sense upon the words, and do violence to the passage, in order to avoid any consequences that may follow. I cannot honestly do it. The same common sense and reason, which prescribe the laws of exegesis, decide that the meaning of a writer must be that which those laws determine it to be. Of course, if I put a gloss upon any passage, which represents it as conveying a meaning different from that which the laws of interpretation would assign to it, I may deceive others, or I may serve the interests of party, but I violate the reason which God has given me by such conduct, and act a part dishonest, and unworthy of an inquirer after truth.

If the fundamental maxims of exegesis lead to the belief, that a writer of the New Testament has contradicted himself, or another sacred writer; then I must revert at once to the question: Is the book divine? Can it be so, if there is contradiction? This question I may settle, (on my responsibility to God), as I please. But I have no right to violate the fundamental rules of language, by forcing a meaning upon

the writer to make him consistent, which, as is obvious on the universal principles of explaining language, he never designed to convey. In determining the question: Whether the writers of the New Testament were inspired? I must always, in attending to the internal evidence of the books, consider whether they have contradicted each other. To enable myself to determine this question, the simple rules of grammatical exegesis can never be violated. I must read this book, as I do all other books. Then, if there evidently be contradiction, I must reject its claims; if there be not, and I think the evidence is sufficient that they are well founded, I must admit them. But at any period subsequent to this, when I have admitted the book to be inspired, I am not at liberty to aver, that the writers could never have taught some particular principle which I dislike; and therefore do violence to the grammatical interpretation, in order to explain away any principle of this nature which they seem to inculcate. My simple inquiry must be, what sentiment does the language of this or that passage convey, without violence or perversion of rule? When this question is settled, *philologically* (not philosophically), then I either believe what is taught, or else reject the claim of divine authority. What can my own theories and reasonings about the absurdity or reasonableness of any particular doctrine, avail in determining whether a writer of the New Testament *has taught* this doctrine or not? My investigation must be conducted independently of my *philosophy*, by my *philology*. And when I have obtained his meaning, by the simple and universal rules of expounding language, I must choose the course I will take; I must either believe his assertion, or reject his authority.

If these be not sound and universal maxims of interpretation, I confess myself a stranger to the whole subject; nor can I help thinking that you will accord with me, at once, in the views just expressed.

Guided then by these principles, let us now come to the

investigation of a few passages in the New Testament, which concern the divine nature of Christ. I take this point, because you have dwelt most upon it; and because, very obviously, when this is admitted or rejected, no possible objection can be felt to admitting or rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity.

You will not require of me, however, to examine at length every text of the New Testament, which I may suppose to have any connection with the subject in question. I must be permitted, in order to save time and patience, to select only those texts, the language of which appears to be genuine, and above the condemnation of *textual* or *diplomatic* criticism; and only such as appear to contain the best and most decisive proof of the point to be discussed. Believing the New Testament to be of divine origin and authority, you will permit me to add, that I cannot think the decision of this or any other question, depends on the *number of times* in which the terms of any decision are repeated. The simple question is: Is such a doctrine really taught?

I observe then,

I. *The New Testament gives to Christ the appellation of* GOD; *and in such a manner that, according to the fair rules of interpretation, only the* SUPREME GOD *can be meant.*

A conspicuous passage in proof of this, I should find in John 1: 1—3, *Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος, καὶ ὁ Λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος. Οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν. Πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο· καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἕν, ὃ γέγονεν.* "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." Verse 10, ... *καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο,* "and the world was made by him."

All known manuscripts agree in the text here. Griesbach has indeed recorded, that for *ὁ Θεός* there is a conjectural reading, *Θεοῦ*; and that for *καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος*, there is a

conjectural reading of *Θεὸς ἦν καὶ ὁ λόγος*. The first of these conjectures was made by Crellius.* The reason of making such a conjecture, Crellius has given. "The greater Christ is," says he, "compared with other gods, (the Father excepted), the less can he be expressly called God, *lest he should be taken for the supreme God the Father.*" And again: "If he [Christ] had been expressly called God by the sacred writers, and had not always been distinguished from God, the sacred writers would have given an occasion to unskilful men, to regard him as the supreme God." (Init. Evang. Johan. p. 295.) To liberate John from being taxed with this imprudence, Crellius proposed to substitute *Θεοῦ* for *Θεός*, in John 1: 1.; so as to say, *the Logos was* OF *God,* instead of saying, as John has done, that *He was God.*

The second conjectural reading is supported by no better authority. Bahrdt, (in Neüsten Offenbarungen), proposed it as a happy expedient to relieve the text from the difficulty and embarrassment, under which he thought it to labour. For instead of saying: "The Word was with God, and the Word was God;" he might then translate it thus: "The Word was with God. God was, and this Word was in the beginning with God," etc.

I have a great regard for the labours and learning of Griesbach; but I am constrained to ask here, why should he have condescended to notice conjectures so gratuitous and utterly unfounded and uncritical as these.

I proceed to the explanation of the text. *Ἐν ἀρχῇ* corresponds exactly with the Hebrew בְּרֵאשִׁית, Gen. 1: 1. I cannot embrace the opinion of those critics, who think that the phrase *ἐν ἀρχῇ*, of itself *simply*, signifies *from eternity.* Although I believe that the Logos did exist from eternity, I do not think it is proved *directly* by this expression. (Compare, however, Gen. 1: 1.) That existence from eternity is necessarily *implied*, may no doubt be properly admitted. *Ἐν ἀρχῇ* is equivalent to *ἐν ἀρχῇ κόσμου, in the beginning of the world,*

* Initium Evang. Johan. restauratum per L. M. Artemonium, P. i. c. 1.

i. e. before the world was made; and so agreeing in this particular with the phrase, John 17: 5, "the glory that I had with thee before the world was;" and Eph. 1: 4, "before the foundation of the world." To say with Crellius, that by ἐν ἀρχῇ is meant the *commencement* of preaching the gospel, or the beginning of Christian instruction, would be making John gravely tell us, that before the Logos preached the gospel, he had an existence. This may do for *Crellius*, but not, as I think, for *John*.

Before the world was created then, the Logos existed. Who or what was this Logos? A person, or an attribute, of God? A real agent, or only the personified wisdom, or reason, or power of God?

It is of no importance in settling this question, that we should know with certainty, whence John derived the appellation *Logos*. In my own mind, after all the attention to this subject that I have been able to pay, the most probable reason of the appellation is, that it is bestowed on Christ in reference to his becoming the *instructer* or *teacher* of mankind, the medium of communication between God and them. I cannot for a moment accede to the opinion that John derived it from Plato, or from the Gnostics. With Plato's works it is not probable that he busied himself. For the Gnostics, he surely had but little respect. Be this however as it may; the Logos appears to be a *person*, i. e. an agent, and not merely an *attribute*. For first, the attributes of God are nowhere else personified by the New Testament writers, i. e. the usage of the New Testament authors is against this mode of writing. Secondly, Logos, if considered as an abstract term, or as merely designating an attribute, can here mean only *wisdom* or *word;* and in what intelligible sense can the *wisdom* or the *word* of God, in the abstract sense, be said to have "*become flesh and dwelt among us*," v. 14? Or why should John select either the wisdom or word of God, as any more concerned with the incarnation, than the *benevolence* of God, or the *mercy* of God, which one might suppose would be the attributes more especially displayed in such an occurrence.

Thirdly, if Logos mean here the *power* of God, as many assert, the exposition is attended with the same difficulties. Fourthly, if it mean, as others aver, the *power* of God *putting itself forth*, i. e. in creation, it is liable to the same objections. In short, make it any *attribute* you please of God, and then suppose it to be thus personified, and you introduce a mode of writing that the New Testament nowhere else displays; and which even the Old Testament exhibits but once (Prov. viii.), in a poetic composition of the most animated and exalted nature.

Yet this is not the chief difficulty. To what class of men could John address the asseveration, that the Logos (*wisdom, word*, or *power* of God) was "with God?" Where did these singular heretics suppose the *power* of God was, except it was *with* him? or where his *wisdom*, or his *word*? A peculiar pertinacity too in their strange opinion they must have had, to induce the apostle to *repeat* with emphasis, in the second verse, that *this Logos was with God.* What would be said of a man, who should gravely assert that the *power* of Peter is *with* Peter; or that his *wisdom* or his *word* is so? And suppose he should add: The *power* or *wisdom* of Peter *is Peter*— with what class of mystics should we rank him? Yet John adds: *The Logos was God.* Until some heretics of the apostolic age can be discovered, who maintained that the attributes of God were *not with* him, I cannot explain why the apostle should assert twice, successively and emphatically, that his attributes *were with him*, in case his meaning was such as is here supposed.

Equally difficult is it for me to divine, how he could say that any attribute (either power or wisdom) *was God;* understanding the word *God* in any sense you please. If it mean *supreme* God, then it reduces itself to this, either that one attribute is the supreme God, or that there are as many Gods as attributes. If it mean an *inferior* God, then the wisdom of God being an inferior God, would seem to imply that his other attributes are *superior* Gods; or else that his wisdom holds the place of *quasi*-god, while his other attri-

butes occupy a lower place. Suppose then it should be said, that *Logos* or *wisdom* denotes the *essence* of God; yet as such it could not be called *Θεός*, which always implies an *agent* or *person*, i. e. it means, as logicians say, a *concrete* and not an *abstract*. The divine nature or essence is called *Θειότης*, or *τὸ Θεῖον*, not *ὁ Θεός*. What could be meant, moreover, by the *essence* of God becoming incarnate?

If however it should be said, that the existence of a sect of heretics, who held that the attributes of God were *not with* him, was unnecessary to justify the apostle for having written the first verse of his gospel, and that we may regard this verse as written simply for general instruction; then I would ask, whether a revelation from heaven is necessary to instruct us, that the *attributes of a being are with that being?* And what shall we think, moreover, of the assertion, that the *wisdom* or *power* of God is God himself?

We proceed to the second clause: *Καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, and the Logos was with God;* i. e. as all agree, with God the Father. Compare vs. 14, 18, also chap. 17: 5, and 1 John 1: 1, 2; which make the point clear. Is this expression capable of any tolerable interpretation, without supposing that the Logos, who was *with* God, was in some respect or other different or diverse from that God *with whom* he was? This Logos was the same that became incarnate, v. 14; that made the most perfect revelation of the will and character of God to men, v. 18; and was called *Christ*. He was therefore, in some respect, diverse from the Father, and by no means to be confounded with him. Yet we must not carry this so far as to make him a being separate and inferior to such a degree as to be in all respects another and an inferior being; for this would contradict the remaining part of the verse. See above, pp. 33 seq., 61 seq.

Καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, and the Logos was God. It has been proposed, (in the so-called Impr. Vers. of the N. Test.), to render the word *Θεός, a god.* Does then the Christian revelation admit of gods superior and inferior? And if so, to what class of inferior gods does the Logos belong? And

how much would such a theory of divine natures, differ from that which admits a Jupiter Optimus Maximus, and gods to an indefinite number greater and less?

But it is said, that "Θεός is destitute of the *article*, and therefore cannot designate the divine being, who is supreme." This observation, however, is very far from being justified, either by the usage of the sacred writers, or the principles of Greek syntax. Among instances where the supreme God is certainly designated, and yet the article is omitted, the inquirer may consult the very chapter in question, vs. 6, 13, 18; also Matt. 19: 26. Luke 16: 13. John 9: 33. 16: 30. Rom. 8: 8. 1 Cor. 1: 3. Gal. 1: 1. Ephes. 2: 8. Heb. 9: 14. Besides, every well informed reader of Greek knows, that where the subject of a proposition (which in this case is ὁ λόγος) has the article, the predicate (Θεός) usually omits it. Such is general Greek usage; and from it commonly dissent only propositions of a reciprocating or convertible nature, as in v. 4 of the chapter in question. It may be added too, that if the writer in question had said καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν ὁ Θεός, it would have conveyed a very different idea from that of the proposition as it now stands. John would then have said: The Logos is the God with whom he is; or the only God; whereas I understand Θεός here to mean a *divine nature*, simply but not abstractly considered, for which it so often stands in other places. Vide Mark 8: 33. 10: 27. 12: 24. Luke 3: 8. 11: 20. 18: 4, 19. John 1: 13. 3: 2. 4: 24. 10: 33. Acts 5: 29. 7: 55. 10: 33. 11: 18 et al. saepe.

I readily acknowledge, that *affirmative* evidence of the somewhat diverse meaning of Θεός here, cannot be drawn merely from the word itself; it must be deduced from the circumstances of the affirmation, united with the supposition that John did assert, and did mean to assert, something that is intelligible. There is indeed no very serious difficulty in taking Θεός (*God*) in the same sense in both clauses, provided we understand it to denote the *divinity*. To interpret the verse thus, would represent John as saying, that while Christ was God or truly divine, there was at the same time,

a sense in which he was *with* God. In order that this should have any possible meaning, a distinction in the Godhead of some kind must be admitted, viz. that the Father is not in all respects the same as the Son.

For myself, I do not hesitate to understand the word *God*, in a sense somewhat diverse, in the two clauses of the verse under consideration. Every word takes a sense adapted to its connection. Such is the rule which must be adopted, after we have once conceded that a writer uses words with propriety, and designs to be understood. So, when our Saviour says: "Let the dead bury their dead," the connection requires us to explain it thus: 'Let those who are morally or spiritually dead, bury those who are corporeally so.' It were easy to accumulate examples, where the very same word, in the same verse, has two different shades of sense. The exigency of the passage (*exigentia loci*) is the rule of interpretation which guides us here. And guided by this exigency, what difficulty is there in supposing that God as Father, is meant, in the first instance; and the divine nature, without any special reference to the peculiar distinction of *Father*, in the second?

I understand John then as affirming, that the *Logos* was God, and yet was with God; viz. that he was truly divine, but still divine in such a manner, that there did exist a distinction between him and the Father. I take the word *God*, in one case, to mean, as in a great number of cases it does mean, God as Father; in the other case, I regard it as a distinction of divine being, of the divinity, without reference to the distinction of Father; a use of the word which is very common.

Least of all have those a right to object to this, who here make the meaning of *God*, in the second instance, to be infinitely different from its meaning in the first instance; understanding by the first, a created, or derived and finite being; by the second, the self-existent, independent, and infinite God.

If you ask now: What could be the object of John in asserting that *the Logos was with God?* I answer, that the

phrase *to be with one*, (*εἶναι πρὸς τίνα*), indicates *conjunction, communion;* see Mark 9: 19. Compare too John 1: 18, where the only begotten Son is said to be "in the bosom (*εἰς τὸν κόλπον*) of the Father," which is a phrase of similar import.

To illustrate (but not fully explain) the meaning of the phrase *to be with God*, it is useful also to compare those cases, where Christians are promised as the summit of their felicity, that they shall be *with* God and Christ, be where they are. See among other passages, John 14: 2, 3. 12: 26. 17: 24. 1 Thess. 4: 17. Compare Rom. 8: 17. 2 Tim. 2: 11, 12.—Colos. 3: 1—4.

In John 17: 5, Christ speaks of that "glory, which he had *with* the Father, before the world was." From all these passages taken together, it would seem that the assertion: The *Logos is with God*, amounts to an assertion that he was *conjunctissimus Deo*, i. e. *most intimately connected with God.* If you ask me *how?* I answer freely, that I cannot tell. The evangelist has merely asserted the *fact*, but has not added one word to explain the *modus.* If I could explain it, then I suppose I could define the distinction which I believe to exist in the Godhead.

But why should John assert such a connection? In opposition, I answer, to those in early times, who asserted that Christ was a being not only *distinct from* God, but *an emanation* from him? The asseveration, that the *Logos was with God*—was from the beginning most intimately connected with him, and was divine—would of course contradict such an opinion.

But does the evangelist here mean to assert of the Logos, that he is God in the supreme sense, or not? This is the fundamental question between us. Analogy, drawn from the New Testament usage of the word *Θεός*, (which nowhere else employs *Θεός* simply and singly, except to designate the supreme God), must be admitted strongly to favour the idea, that Christ is here asserted to be truly divine. I readily allow that in the Old Testament, the word God has various

applications; that it is applied, though only in the plural number, to magistrates; that it is used to designate those, who for a time stand as it were in the place of God; as Moses was to be for a *god* to Pharaoh (Exod. 7: 1), and instead of God to Aaron (Exod. 4: 16). But it is not possible, in any instances of this nature, to mistake the meaning. The adjuncts, or context, always guard effectually against mistakes. Men, or inferior beings, are never called *God* or *Gods* simply. We read of a "god to Pharaoh;" also, "I have said ye are gods, *but ye shall die like men;*" of the god of Ekron; the god of the Ammonites; the gods of the heathen, etc. Is a mistake possible here? But the Logos is called God *simply*. Nor is this all. Admitting that the name determined nothing, (and for sake of the argument I am willing to admit it), yet the writer has added explanations of his meaning, which seem to place what he intended to assert, by the expression in question, beyond the reach of fair debate.

Πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο· καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἕν, ὃ γέγονεν. . . . . ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο. "All things were [made] by him; and without him was nothing [made], which was [made]. . . . The world was [made] by him."

I have excluded the word *made*, by placing it in brackets, merely to show that the sense is in no wise changed, by the version of those critics who tell us that *ἐγένετο* never means *made*, but simply *was*. Yet nothing can be farther from correctness, than such an assertion. Accordingly, *ποιέω* and *γίνομαι* are used as synonymes; as in James 3: 9, comp. Gen. 1: 26, in the Septuagint; Gen. 2: 4. Isaiah 48: 7. The cases where *γίνομαι* means to *make* or *produce*, are so numerous and obvious, that a moment's delay in respect to this part of the subject would be useless. Any good lexicon, under the word *γίνομαι*, will furnish adequate proof of this. If not, read the commentary of Theodoret on the two first chapters of Genesis, which places the question as to the common use of *γίνομαι* in such a sense beyond debate.

But what are the *all things*, the *universe* (*τὰ πάντα*),

which the *Logos* made, or caused? "The moral world—the Christian church;" answers Faustus Socinus. To this exposition, however, there are two objections. First, a part of these same *τὰ πάντα*, are, in v. 10, represented as *the world*, *ὁ κόσμος*; a term nowhere applied in the New Testament to the Christian church, nor to men as morally amended by the gospel. Secondly, this very *world* (*ὁ κόσμος*), which he created, *did not know* or *acknowledge* him, *αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω*; whereas the distinguishing trait of Christians is, that they *know* Christ; that they *know* the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.

Τὰ πάντα, then, which the Logos created, means, (as common usage and the exigency of the passage require), the *universe*, the worlds material and immaterial, v. 10. Here, then in John 1: 1 seq., is a passage, in which beyond all reasonable doubt Christ is called *God;* and where the context, instead of furnishing us with reasons for understanding the word *God* in an inferior sense, (as is usual when this designation is applied to inferior beings), has plainly and unequivocally taught us, that this *God* (*Θεός*), who was the *Logos*, created the universe. The question then is reduced to this simple state: Is he, who created the universe, truly and properly divine? On this question I shall make a few remarks, when I have considered some other passages, which ascribe the work of creation to Christ.

Heb. 1: 10—12. *Καί· Σὺ κατ' ἀρχάς, κύριε, τὴν γῆν ἐθεμελίωσας, καὶ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου εἰσὶν οἱ οὐρανοί. Αὐτοὶ ἀπολοῦνται, σὺ δὲ διαμένεις· καὶ πάντες ὡς ἱμάτιον παλαιωθήσονται, καὶ ὡσεὶ περιβόλαιον ἑλίξεις αὐτούς, καὶ ἀλλαγήσονται· σὺ δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς εἶ, καὶ τὰ ἔτη σου οὐκ ἐκλείψουσι.* "And: Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands; they shall perish, but thou remainest; yea all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."

These words are spoken of the *Son of God;* for they are intimately connected by the conjunction *and* with v. 8, where it is written: "But unto the *Son* he saith," etc. According to the laws of grammar, and most clearly according to the nature and design of the apostle's argument, the ellipsis to be supplied, in the beginning of the tenth verse, after *and* (*καί*) is: "And [*to the Son he saith*]: Thou, Lord," etc. No other exposition can be pointed out, which does not make a violent divulsion of the passage from the connection of the writer's argument.

The question still remains: 'What is meant by *founding the earth*, and by the heavens being the work of Christ's hands?' To answer the first question, and place the answer above the possibility of a reasonable doubt, it is necessary only to compare the passages, in which Jehovah is said to have *founded the earth*. By this phrase, the *creation* of it is indubitably meant. The passages may be found in Ps. 24: 2. 89: 11. 104: 5. 119: 90. Job 38: 4. Prov. 3: 19. Is. 48: 13. 51: 13. Zec. 12: 1; where, if you inspect the Septuagint, you will see the very verb (*θεμελιόω*) employed, which the apostle uses in our text.

In regard to the "heavens being the work of Christ's hands," it is an expression plainly equivalent to the one just considered, and signifies the *creation* of the heavens. Thus in Ps. 8: 4, 6: "When I consider the heavens, *the work of thy hands;*" which is parallel with "The moon and stars which thou hast ordained;" (Sept. *ἐθεμελίωσας*). So in v. 6: "And hast placed him over *the work of thy hands;* all things hast thou put under his feet;" i. e. placed him over the creation.

To prove that the phrase to *create the heavens and the earth*, means to create *all things*, it is necessary only to consult Gen. 1: 1. Ex. 20: 11. 31: 17. Neh. 9: 6. Ps. 121: 2. 124: 8. 134: 3, and other like passages, which any Concordance will supply.

It will be remembered, that the passage in question (Heb.

1: 10—12) is a quotation from the Old Testament; and that to quote the language of the O. Test., therefore, in order to explain it, is peculiarly appropriate and necessary.

Would any one, now, unembarrassed by peculiarity of system, ever suspect that Christ's *founding the earth, and the heavens being the work of his hands*, could mean anything less than the creation of the universe? Yet we have been told, by some distinguished Unitarians, that the *heavens* mean the *Christian* state or dispensation, and the earth the *Jewish* one.

But first, this is against usage, either in the Old or New Testament; there being nothing to support such a sense of it. Isaiah speaks indeed of *creating a* NEW *heaven and a* NEW *earth*, (65: 17); and of *planting the heavens and the earth* (51: 16), in a moral sense, i. e. making a moral change or creation. But then the language itself, in the first case, indicates that the *old* or *material* creation is *not* meant; and in the second case, the context makes it as clear, what kind of heaven and earth is to be planted or established, and what the planting and establishing of them means, for it shows plainly that the Jewish church and state are to be renewed and established. The meaning then assigned by some Unitarians to the passage in Heb. i, is against the plain and constant usage of the Scriptures, in regard to such expressions, when they occur in an *unlimited* form, as they do in the passage under examination.

Secondly, if the Jewish and the Christian states are here meant, in what sense are they to wax old as a garment, and to be changed? Of the Jewish state this might, without much difficulty, be affirmed. But how the Christian dispensation is *to be changed*, how that "kingdom which *shall have* NO *end*," (Luke 1: 33), is to "perish," I am unable to explain.

"It is a *moral* creation of which Christ is the author," says Artemonius (i. e. Crellius), Init. Evang. Johan. This, however, does not explain the matter; for how is it that the *moral creation* of Christ is to be *changed* and perish, i. e. to

be annihilated? Most obviously, his moral creation is to be eternal.

Another method of explaining this subject has been, to aver that the passage here quoted by the apostle from Ps. 102: 25—27, is, in the original, plainly applicable to Jehovah only; and that none would conjecture, from the simple perusal of this Psalm, how Christ could be the subject of it. Conceding that the passage is applicable to Jehovah only, (and it would be difficult to show why this is not to be conceded), what is the consequence? Either that the apostle has, directly and without qualification, applied to Christ language used by an inspired writer of the O. Test. to designate the Creator of the world, with his eternal and immutable nature; or that he has, (in a way singular indeed for a man of piety and honesty and intelligence), accommodated language descriptive of the infinite Jehovah only, to a created and dependent being. *Κύριε* (*Lord*), in the Greek, corresponds to the word יְהוָה (*Jehovah*) in the original Hebrew; the Septuagint having commonly rendered it in this manner. And although יְהוָה (*Jehovah*) in not in the Hebrew text, (Ps. 102: 26), yet it is evident from the preceding context, that it must be understood there, as the subject of the verb יָסַדְתָּ, *thou hast founded.* Christ then is here called by the apostle, *Jehovah;* and *eternity, immutability, and the creation of the universe* are ascribed to him.*

* I readily admit, that *κύριος* is not always synonymous with *Jehovah.* But where the word *Jehovah* is used, in the Hebrew of the Old Testament, *κύριος* stands in the Septuagint and in the New Testament, as the habitual translation of it. Therefore *κύριος* in the New Testament must of course, in such cases, have the same meaning as *Jehovah* in the Old Testament. The reason why *κύριος* is used by the New Testament writers, as the translation of *Jehovah* in the Hebrew Scriptures, is, that the Jews in reading their sacred writings, were not accustomed to pronounce the word *Jehovah* (יְהוָה), but for the most part they read אֲדֹנָי (*Lord*, *κύριος*) in the room of it. This custom is at least as old as the Septuagint version, which translates יְהוָה by *κύριος*; and thus it exhibits proof, that the modern custom of reading אֲדֹנָי for יְהוָה was then religiously observed. Josephus speaks of *Jehovah*, as the name which *οὐ θεμιτὸν λαλεῖν, it is not lawful to utter.*

I cannot think that the paraphrase of Grotius, on the passage in question, deserves a serious refutation. "Thou wast the cause," says he, "that the earth was founded, and on thy account the heavens were made." If this be not a different thing from what the language of the apostle naturally means, or can mean, I confess that I know not any bounds which may be set to paraphrastic and mystical exegesis. Suppose now that the Gnostics, who maintained that evil demons (and not Jehovah) created the material world, should still have paraphrased the first verse in Genesis in this manner: "Thou Jehovah wast the cause why the heavens and the earth were created; and when asked, how this could consist with their sentiments, and what they could mean by it, they should have replied: "Out of enmity to thee, the evil demons brought this world of matter into existence;" would not this be explaining away the creative act of Jehovah, exactly as Grotius explains away the evidence, in the passage last adduced, that Christ was the Creator?

Col. 1: 15—17. *Ὃς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως· ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα, τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὰ ὁρατὰ καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα, εἴτε θρόνοι, εἴτε κυριότητες, εἴτε ἀρχαί, εἴτε ἐξουσίαι· τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται· καὶ αὐτός ἐστι πρὸ πάντων, καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκε·* "Who is the image of the invisible God, the head of all creation; for by him were all things created, both celestial and terrestrial, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

In the first clause (*πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως*) I have departed a little from our common version, merely in order to make what I consider to be the plain meaning of the passage, as clear as the nature of the case will permit.

Because Christ is said (in v. 20) "to reconcile (*καταλλάξαι*) all things unto himself," and these are said to be "things in heaven and things on earth;" and afterwards he is also

represented as breaking down the wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles; some ingenious commentators have supposed, that "things in heaven and things on earth" mean *Jews* and *Gentiles*. How very unnatural this explanation is, no one can help feeling who reads the passage in an unbiassed manner. In what tolerable sense can the Jews and Gentiles be called "things *visible* and *invisible?*" Or how shall we explain the phrase, "things in heaven and things on earth," as applied to them? By "reconciling things in heaven and things on earth," seems evidently to be meant the bringing into union, under one great head, i. e. Christ, by a new and special bond of intercommunication, both angels and men. In like manner, the two great parties on earth, Jews and Gentiles, are united together. But why Christ should be called "the image of the invisible God," and the "head (*πρωτότοκος*) of all creation," because he is merely the instrument of bringing Jews and Gentiles together, is not apparent to me. Yet to be such an instrument, is all that the passage in question ascribes to him, if we are to construe it in the manner above related. But when we understand the words of the apostle as describing the creation of the worlds celestial and terrestrial, (*οἱ οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ*, comp. Heb. 1: 10—12), and ascribing it to Christ, then we find sufficient reason for designating him by the exalted appellations in question.

It has also been affirmed, that a *moral* creation only is here ascribed to Christ. But words like these, in such a connexion and with such adjuncts, are no where else used in such a sense. Moreover, in what sense has the *moral* creation by Christ affected the angels? The good ones needed not repentance or pardon; the bad ones have never sought or obtained either. "Verily he did not assist the angels (*οὐ δήπου ἀγγέλων ἐπιλαμβάνεται*), but the seed of Abraham," Heb. 2: 16.

Until I see different light shed over the passage in question, I must regard it, therefore, as very clearly ascribing the creation of the universe to Christ.

But you will say, perhaps, that in John 1: 3, all things are said to be made by Christ (*διὰ Χριστοῦ*), as the *instrumental* and not the *principal* cause; the preposition *διά* usually denoting such instrumental cause. In Col. 1: 16 it is also said, that all things were created *by Christ* (*δι' αὐτοῦ*); and in Heb. 1: 2, God is said to have created the worlds *by his Son: Δι' οὗ* (sc. *υἱοῦ*) *καὶ τοὺς αἰῶνας ἐποίησε.*

The allegation, however, that *διά* does not designate the *principal* as well as the *instrumental* cause, can by no means be supported. In Romans 11: 36, all things are said to be of God (*ἐξ αὐτοῦ*), and *by* God (*δι' αὐτοῦ*); which is the very form of expression applied to Christ, in Col. 1: 16—20. So Heb. 2: 10: "For it became him [God the Father], for whom (*δι' ὅν*) are all things, and *by* whom (*δι' οὗ*) are all things, etc. 1 Cor. 1: 9: "God is faithful, *by* whom (*δι' οὗ*) ye were called into the fellowship of his Son," etc. But to prove that *διά* may be and is employed before a noun designating a *principal* cause, is utterly superfluous to any one who has a good Greek lexicon at his command. To deny this, in the present state of philology, is fairly out of question.

The principal difficulty remaining is, to explain the phrase, "by whom (*δι' οὗ*) he [the Father] made the worlds;" Heb. 1: 2. The apostle has added sufficient, in vs. 10—12, as it might seem, to prevent mistake here. If, however, the difficulty seems still to press, it may be compared with Hos. 1: 7, "I [Jehovah] will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them *by Jehovah*, בַּיהוָה." Is the second Jehovah merely the *instrumental* cause, in this case? Of the same nature is the phraseology in Gen. 19: 24, "And *Jehovah* rained down, upon Sodom and Gomorrha, fire and brimstone FROM JEHOVAH out of heaven." Must the last Jehovah, in this case, be inferior to the first? If not, then the phrase that *God made the worlds by his Son*, does not imply, as a matter of course, that the Son is of an inferior nature. It does imply, indeed, that there is a distinction between Father and Son; and this is what we aver to be a scripture-doctrine. It seems plainly to declare, also, that *God as* SON

was in an especial manner concerned with the creation of the worlds. If the Logos, as John asserts, made *all things*, what is there impossible or improbable in this?

From the passages of Scripture thus far considered, it appears plain, that the apostles have ascribed the *creation* of the universe to Christ. And now we come, next in order, to the consideration of the simple question: Whether he who created the world, is really and truly divine?

First, then, permit me to ask, if the act of creation does not prove the being who performs it to be omniscient, omnipotent, and independent, then how is it possible to conceive of anything, which does or can prove the existence of such a Being? To bring this world into existence from nothing; to establish such perfect harmony and design through all the operations of nature; to set in motion unnumbered worlds and systems of worlds, and all in the most perfect harmony and order; requires more intelligence, more power, and more wisdom, than ever belonged to any finite being. And if these things do not characterize the infinite Being, it seems to me that no proof of the existence of such a Being can be adduced.

It is in vain to tell me here, that the creation of the universe can be accomplished by *delegated* power, i. e. by an inferior and subordinate being. What can be meant by omnipotence, omniscience, and infinite wisdom, (all of which must belong to a Creator), being *delegated?* Can God *delegate* his *perfections?* If so, then the Gnostics, when pressed with the argument that Jehovah, the God of the Jews, was the supreme God, because he created the heavens and the earth, might have replied, that he did this only by *delegated* power; and that the act of creation, therefore, proves nothing as to Godhead. Would you not reply to such an allegation, that the act of creating the universe is one which no finite or secondary being can perform? If this act do not designate the absolute, supreme, omnipotent, and omniscient Being, then no proof that such a Being exists can possibly be adduced.

Why may we not use, now, the very same arguments, to confute those who maintain that Christ created the world by *delegated* power? The apostle having decided the question that Christ did create the world, has decided, consequently, that he must be *truly divine.*

Agreeably to this reasoning, the Bible everywhere appeals to *creative* power, as the peculiar and distinguishing prerogative of the supreme God, and attributes it solely to Jehovah. Let any one read, for example, Gen. 2: 2, 3. Ex. 20: 11. Is. 44: 24. Jer. 10: 12. Ps. 8: 3, 4. 102: 25, and other passages of the same tenor. Let him read Isaiah xl. and onward, where God by his prophet makes a most solemn challenge to all polytheists, to bring the objects of their worship into competition with him; and he declares himself to be distinguished from them all, by his being "the Creator of the ends of the earth" (v. 28), and by his having formed and arranged the heavens, (v. 26.)

Can it be made plainer than these passages make it, that *creative* power was regarded by the Hebrew prophets, as the appropriate and peculiar attribute of the supreme God? Need I say, that the O. Test. is filled with passages which ascribe the work of creation to Jehovah alone? Who does not find them everywhere intermixed, in the most delightful and affecting manner, with all the instructions of the sacred Hebrew writers?

Now if a subordinate agent, a *finite* spirit, did create the universe, why should all the instructions of the O. Test. be so framed, as inevitably to lead the Jewish nation to disbelieve and reject this fact? Specially so, as the Jews were very strongly inclined to polytheism; and a plurality of gods would have been very agreeable to their wishes. And why, after a lapse of so many centuries, should the writers of the New Testament controvert all that the Hebrew Scriptures had taught on this subject, and lead men to admit that a *finite* being could and did create the world? Most of all, how could Paul say (Rom. 1: 20), that the heathen were without excuse for not acknowledging the *eternal power and godhead*

of the Divinity, because of the evidence which his *creating* power afforded—because they could look upon the things that were made, and reason from them.

And is this truth, (that the Deity possesses eternal power and godhead), so plain then, and so easily deduced from CREATING ENERGY, that the very heathen are destitute of all excuse, for not seeing and admitting it, and yet, can it be the object of Christianity to bring us back to the very polytheism for which the apostle condemned them? To bring us to "worship the *creature* as the CREATOR?" Does Christianity contradict a truth of natural religion so plain and incontrovertible, that the very heathen were without excuse for not acknowledging it? And after reading such a passage in the writings of Paul, can it be possible to suppose, that he ascribed the creation of the world to any being but the true God only? Compare now Acts 17: 23—26, with John 1: 1—3, and 10; Heb. 1: 10—12; Colos. 1: 14—17; and then say whether it is possible to admit the rules of interpretation which you have laid down, and not admit that the apostles designed to assert, that Christ is the creator of the universe? And if he is so, is it possible to deny that he is *truly divine?*

It were easy to produce passages of the New Testament in abundance, which ascribe the same works to Christ as to God; e. g. John 5. 17—23. 14: 9, 11, and the like. But as the vindication of these would swell these letters beyond their proper length, I shall not enter into the discussion of them at present. I am not anxious to increase the number of witnesses; for acknowledging the New Testament to be of divine authority, I consider whatever it plainly declares once to be the truth. The *relevancy* and *plainness* of the testimony, therefore, is more the object of my solicitude, than the *number* of witnesses; a point, I may add, in which many who have defended our sentiments have greatly erred.

I shall proceed, therefore, to other texts of Scripture, in which Christ is declared to be GOD.

Rom. 9: 5. *Ὧν οἱ πατέρες, καὶ ἐξ ὧν ὁ Χριστός, τὸ κατὰ σάρκα, ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων Θεὸς, εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας·*

Ἀμήν. "Whose are the fathers; and from whom, in respect to the flesh [his human nature], Christ [descended], who is God over all, blessed forever; Amen."

In regard to this text it may be remarked, first, that although Griesbach has filled his margin with conjectural and other readings, he attributes no considerable weight to any of them; for *all* the manuscripts of the epistle to the Romans which have been collated, contain the text as it stands; as do *all* the ancient versions, and *nearly all* the fathers.

In rendering *τὸ κατὰ σάρκα*, *in respect to his human nature*, I feel supported by corresponding passages, in Rom. 1: 3.* Acts 2: 30. And that *ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων Θεός, εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας*, can be well translated, *who is supreme God, blessed forever*, might be shown in various ways. *Ὁ ὤν* is here put, as is common, (e. g. John 1: 18. 3: 13. 2 Cor. 11: 31), for *ὅς ἐστι, who is*. The ground of this lies simply in the nature of Greek usage. Whenever *ὁ* is used for *ὅς*, it takes the participle *ὤν* instead of the verb *ἐστί*; and so we have *ὁ ὤν*, or *ὅς ἐστι*, invariably.

Ἐπὶ πάντων Θεός is literally *over-all God*, i. e. supreme God. One should compare with the phraseology here the word *πάντα* (*all*) as used with respect to the dominion of Christ, in Col. 1: 17. Eph. 1: 23. John 3: 31, and 1 Cor. 15: 27. It is used in such passages in order to describe him as the head or ruler of the universe. What then can *ἐπὶ πάντων Θεός* mean, but *supreme God?*

But on no text have greater pains been bestowed, in order to devise an unusual construction and meaning. Schlichting proposed to transpose *ὁ ὤν*, and read *ὢν ὁ*; i. e. *of whom* [viz. the Jewish fathers] *is God, blessed forever*. But as in this very epistle, the apostle has laboured to prove that God belongs as well to the Gentiles as the Jews (ch. 3: 29), this expedient would seem to impeach the apostle's consistency, as well as violate the text. Nor would the text itself, as amended by Schlichting's conjecture, be in any measure accordant with the idiom of the Greek language. If *Θεός* has

* As it stands in the Textus Receptus.

the article, (and his transposition makes it *ὁ Θεός*), then *εὐλογητός* must of necessity have it too; inasmuch as an adjective following a noun with an article, and agreeing with it, of necessity takes the article.

Wetstein's conjecture, that it should be read *ὁ ὤν, ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων Θεός*, is not any more fortunate. Such a mode of expression as *ὁ ὢν ὁ*, all relating to the same subject, is repugnant to Greek usage. Besides, this conjecture, like that of Schlichting, not only violates the integrity of the text, but assigns the article to *Θεός*, and omits it before *εὐλογητός*; which is surely inadmissible.

Enough of amending the apostle's words by conjecture, without the authority of a single manuscript or ancient version. Critical acumen has also employed itself, in dividing and translating the verse in question, in a manner different from that in our common Testament. The late Professor Justi, at Marpurg, a man of some acuteness and much taste, undertook to defend the ingenious supposition, that the latter part of the verse is a *doxology*. He renders it thus: "Whose ancestors were those [renowned] fathers from whom the Messiah, as to his mortal body, was derived, who is exalted over all [the fathers], God be blessed forever!" Thus, by the aid of supplying an idea not contained in the text, and by doing violence to the usages of language in the doxological part, he has devised a method in which we may avoid the assertion that Christ is *God over all* or *supreme God*. But who does not perceive the violence and inaptitude of the divulsion which he makes, by separating the former from the latter part of the verse. Besides, how would a *doxology* fit the passage in question? Crellius, (Init. Evang. Johan. p. 230, 237), long ago was candid enough to own, that when the apostle was affected with the greatest sadness, on account of the unbelief of his Jewish brethren and the loss of their privileges, a *doxology* or exclamation of praise was not very congruous. A prayer (as in ch. 10: 1) would seem, as he thinks, to be much more appropriate.

Omitting however all this, it may be added, that Greek

usage by no possibility admits of the doxological version of Justi. *Θεὸς εὐλογητός* means *God who is blessed;* i. e. the proposition in such a case is assumed, not asserted. But *εὐλογητὸς ὁ Θεός* means *God be blessed*, or *let God be blessed* or *praised.* In accordance with this Greek usage, we find five instances of doxology in the New Testament, and about forty in the Old, in which *εὐλογητός* is uniformly placed *first.* The same order is observed in respect to *κατάρατος* (cursed), when an imprecation is uttered.

Besides, the text mus be changed to make out a doxology; for we must read *ὁ Θεός* instead of *Θεός*, since universal usage prescribes *εὐλογητὸς ὁ Θεός.* (The instance in Ps. 46: 19. Sept., brought by Stoltz in his *Erleuterungen*, to support Justi's rendering, depends merely on wrong punctuation, and the repetition of a word which does not correspond to the Hebrew text.)

Finally, if a doxology to the Father were intended here, it is scarcely possible to suppose, that some particle of transition should not have been inserted, in order to give notice of so great a change. But no text, no manuscript, no ancient version, gives us a trace of such a particle. To invent a new reading and force it upon the text, or to substitute a conjectural reading which originated merely from theological speculation, and all this when the evidence of the integrity of the text is incontrovertible—what is it but to introduce a principle fundamentally subversive of all interpretation and criticism, and to give up the Scriptures to be moulded according to every man's own wishes?

All conjectures and theories, then, appear to be quite incompetent to explain away the common rendering of the verse, and the meaning connected with it. On the other hand, we may ask: How comes it that Christ, *according to his human nature* (*τὸ κατὰ σάρκα*), is said to have descended from the fathers? What if I should affirm that David, as to his human nature, was descended from Jesse? Would you not of course ask, what other nature had he except a human one? And such an inquiry, forced upon us by the method

of expression in question, the apostle has immediately answered; for as to his nature *not* human, he asserts that he was "supreme God, blessed forever; Amen." To have been progenitors of the human nature of such an exalted being as Christ, the apostle reckons as one of the special privileges which the Jews had enjoyed. Comp. Rom. 9: 1—4.

I do not argue that Christ is divine, merely because the appellation *Θεός* is bestowed upon him. But if *ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων Θεός* be not *supreme God;* and if the antithesis in this verse do not require us to understand a *divine* nature here; then I must despair of ever discovering the sentiment of any text of Scripture, by appealing to any or all the rules of exegesis.

Heb. 1: 8, 9. *Ὁ θρόνος σου, ὁ θεός, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος· ῥάβδος εὐθύτητος ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας σου. Ἠγάπησας δικαιοσύνην, καὶ ἐμίσησας ἀνομίαν, διὰ τοῦτο ἔχρισέ σε ὁ θεός, ὁ θεός σου, ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως παρὰ τοὺς μετόχους σου.* "But unto the Son he saith: Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

This passage is quoted from Ps. 45: 6, 7. It has been objected, that *ὁ Θεός* here should not be translated as a Vocative but as a Nominative; e. g. "God is thy throne forever and ever, or thine everlasting throne or eternal support."

So far as the *form* of the word is concerned, *ὁ Θεός* is the common Vocative of the New Testament and the Septuagint. No objection, therefore, to the usual rendering of this verse in the Vocative case, can be made from the *form* of the word; for the practice of assigning a Vocative sense to a Nominative form, is altogether common in Hellenistic Greek. The Attics often adopt the same usage. One needs only to open the Septuagint in the book of Psalms, or in almost any other part, to see incontrovertible evidence that *ὁ Θεός* is the common Vocative of the *Hellenistic* writers.

To the translation *God is thy throne*, i. e. thy support, several objections may be made.

(1) Greek *usage* does not permit such a version. The subject and predicate cannot both have the article, in a case like this. *God is thy throne* would be thus written in Greek: *θρόνος σου ὁ Θεός.** For such a change in the text there is no authority whatever.

(2) Such a translation would render insipid the argument of the apostle, in this chapter, to prove the preëminently exalted nature of Christ. To say of this illustrious personage: "God is thy throne," i. e. thy support, might well excite the persons to whom the epistle was addressed to ask: And who is not supported by God? How can it help to show that Christ is entitled to high *preëminence*, by alleging that another being is his *supporter?*

(3) Such a translation contradicts the meaning of the word *throne*, understood either literally or figuratively. Literally it is the *seat* on which kings sit. This sense is here out of the question. Figuratively, it stands for *dominion*, *empire*, *regal authority*, because it is one of the symbols of such authority. But I know of no such figurative sense to this word as that of *support*. And what possible sense would it make to say: *God is thy dominion, thy regal authority?* If you aver that this may mean as much as to say: God is the cause of thy *dominion* or *regal authority;* then I ask again, of what king's dominion and authority is not God the cause? Is it not the universal doctrine of the Bible, that "*by him* kings reign, and princes decree justice?" And how then is Christ entitled to any *preëminence*, because God is the cause of his dominion? Or what advances does the apostle make in his argument, by such an assertion?

To the translation in question, there is still another objection, which is drawn from the nature of Hebrew parallelism in poetry. The verse under discussion plainly is one, in which the

* See the latter clause of the verse, where *ἡ ῥάβδος* (with the article) is the subject, but *ῥάβδος* (without it) the predicate, according to the usual laws of the language.

subject is the same in both parts, i. e. it is a synonymous parallelism. Now the second member of this is: "The sceptre of thy kingdom is a sceptre of righteousness;" in other words, *thy dominion is righteous.* The first member of the parallelism, consequently, is to be explained in the same way, and evidently means: *Thy dominion* (throne) *is everlasting.* What could be more tasteless or unmeaning here, than to say: God is thy throne, meaning to say: God is thy support or cause of dominion, when the evident object of the writer is, to show the *preëminent* dignity and dominion of the Son of God?

The proposed mode of rendering, then, violates Greek usage; it frustrates the argument of the apostle; it forces an unexampled meaning upon θρόνος; and finally it transgresses the laws of poetic parallelism in the Hebrew original, from which the passage was taken.

But several objections have been made against understanding the word *God*, in the passage now under consideration, in its highest sense when applied to Christ. It is said, that the person called *God* (*Elohim*) here, is addressed as having a God above him, *thy God;* and also, as having *fellows* who are merely kings; and therefore that he cannot be supreme God. As to the mere application of the name *God*, in this case, I should not be disposed to make more out of it, than that it designates the King Messiah as *Lord of all.* So much seems to be certain, viz. his supremacy over all others. His throne, i. e. dominion, is everlasting. As the Messiah, the anointed king, it might with the greatest propriety be said that Jehovah is his God; for as Messiah, he is to be considered as incarnate, and of course subordinate in respect to his human nature. Is it a matter of wonder, that the same person can, at one moment, be said to have everlasting dominion, of whom it is said, at the next, that Jehovah is *his God?* It is a wonder of the same nature as that which perplexed the Jews, when Christ asked them how David could call the Messiah *Lord*, while at the same time he was his son. It is a wonder which no ground but that of Trinitarians can ever

well explain; I mean the ground, that the divine and *human* natures co-existed in Christ; and consequently that in the same sentence, he could with propriety speak of himself as human or divine. The sacred writers appear not to take the least pains definitely to separate the two natures, in anything which they say of either. They everywhere speak of Christ, (so it appears to me), as either human or divine, or as both, according to the exigency of the passage. They do not seem to apprehend any danger of mistake, in regard to the subject; no more than we do when we say that Abraham is *dead*, or that Abraham is *alive*. We never think it necessary to add the words *as to his body* in the one case, or *as to his soul* in the other.

This very negligence, (if I may be allowed the expression, saving everything that would imply improper want of care), presents a powerful argument to me, I must confess, to prove that the sacred writers regarded the human and divine natures as so intimately connected in Christ, that it was unnecessary and inexpedient to attempt a distinctive separation of them, on every occasion which brought to view the person or actions of Christ.*

As to the objection that the king is spoken of as one who has "fellows," and therefore as one who is not *divine*, I would merely remark, that Christ is introduced here as the incarnate Messiah. To the office of king, God "consecrated him with the oil of gladness," i. e. placed him in a royal station more exalted than that of other kings; and that there is given to him the "oil of gladness above his fellows," imports that his rank is above that of others who also hold a regal office.

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* I am aware of the translation, by Gesenius and others, of the clause in question: "Thy Gods-throne is forever and ever." But, (1) This concedes the principal thing which it is designed to deny, namely, that the throne of the king here is like to, or the same as, the throne of God; for the meaning must be this. (2) This rendering admits the suffix pronoun ךָ to belong to the first of two nouns in the *construct state;* which is against the ordinary laws of the Hebrew language. Rosenmueller therefore rightly translates: Thy throne, O God, etc.

As to the allegation, that the 45th Psalm does not belong to the *Messiah*, but to David, or Solomon; how can this be proved? I know it is easy to assert, that this Psalm is a mere epithalamium or nuptial ode, on the marriage of one of the Jewish kings (probably Solomon) with a foreign princess, either of Persia or of Egypt. But I know not how to reconcile such declarations as this Psalm contains, with the views of the Hebrews in regard to intrenching upon the prerogatives of the Godhead. At all events, the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews has expressly affirmed, that the passage in question was uttered *πρὸς τὸν υἱόν*, i. e. in respect to the *Son*.

Here then, if our view be correct, is one instance more in which Christ is called *God*, with such adjuncts as render it probable that supreme divinity is designed to be predicated of him.

I should rank the texts, which I have already produced, as leading ones to establish the divine nature of Christ. But there are others which should not be neglected. Will you permit me briefly to advert to some of them, inasmuch as they ought not to be omitted in an impartial examination of scriptural evidence with respect to the present topic.

1 John 5: 20. *Καὶ οἴδαμεν ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἥκει, καὶ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν διάνοιαν, ἵνα γινώσκωμεν τὸν ἀληθινόν· καί ἐσμεν ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ, ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ. Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθινὸς θεὸς καὶ ἡ ζωὴ αἰώνιος.* "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."

There are two reasons here, why *ὁ ἀληθινὸς θεός*, *the true God*, may be referred to Christ. 1. The grammatical construction favours it. Christ is the immediate antecedent. I grant that pronouns sometimes relate to a more remote antecedent; but cases of this nature stand on the ground of necessity, or mere poetic usage, and are not of common grammatical usage. What doubt can there be, that John could without scruple call the Logos the *true God*, *ὁ ἀληθινὸς Θεός*, when

he had before asserted that he *is God*, and *has created all things?*

But secondly, my principal reason for referring the phrase *true God* (*ὁ ἀληθινὸς Θεός*) to Christ, is the other adjunct which stands with it: This is the true God—and the ETERNAL LIFE. How familiar is this language with John, as applied to Christ! "In him (i. e. Christ) was LIFE, this LIFE was the light of men—giving LIFE to the world—the bread of LIFE—my words are spirit and LIFE—I am the way, the truth, and the LIFE—the Logos of LIFE. This LIFE (Christ) was manifested and we have *seen it*, and do testify to you, and declare, the ETERNAL LIFE, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us." 1 John 1: 1, 2. Now as I cannot find any instance in John's writings, in which the appellation of LIFE and *eternal* LIFE is bestowed upon the Father, to designate him as the author of spiritual and eternal life; and as this occurs so frequently in John's writings as applied to Christ; the laws of exegesis compel me here to accord, in my exposition, with the common laws of grammar, and to construe both *ὁ ἀληθινὸς Θεός* and *ἡ ζωὴ αἰώνιος*, (or as some manuscripts more consonant with Greek idiom read: *ἡ ζωὴ ἡ αἰώνιος*), both of Christ. If then he is the *true God*, must he not be really *divine?* If the *true* God be not divine, who is?

John 20: 28. *Ἀπεκρίθη Θωμᾶς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ Θεός μου.* "And Thomas answered and said unto him: My Lord, and my God!"

I have three reasons for adducing this text. (1) There is no satisfactory proof, that it is an exclamation of surprise or astonishment. No phrase of this kind, by which the Jews were accustomed to express surprise or astonishment, has yet been produced; and there is no evidence that such a phrase, with the sense alleged, belongs to their language. (2) The evangelist tells us, that Thomas addressed himself to Jesus, i. e. *spoke to him*, *εἶπεν αὐτῷ*; he did not merely *exclaim.* (3) The commendation, which the Saviour immediately bestows upon Thomas, serves chiefly to defend the meaning

that I attach to the verse. Christ commends him for having seen and believed. The evidence that he believed, was contained in the expression under examination; for before uttering this expression, he is represented as doubting. On the supposition then, that the expression was a mere exclamation, what evidence was it to the mind of Jesus, or could it be to the minds of others, that he admitted the claims of the Saviour of men, to the character which was connected with this office? What more proof of real belief can be found in such an *exclamation*, (if it be truly one), than we can find that men are Christians, when they repeat, as is very common on occasions of surprise or delight, the name of Christ by way of exclamation? But if we admit, that the words of Thomas were the proper evidence and expression of that belief for which the Saviour commended him, (and I do not see how we can fairly avoid this); then we must admit that he will commend us, for believing that he is both *Lord and God*, *Κύριος καὶ Θεός*. Schlichting, indeed, gets rid of this by a notable expedient. He avers that *Lord* is to be referred to Christ, and *God* to the Father; which latter, as he thinks, Thomas spoke after some interval of time had elapsed!

I pass over several passages, where our common text applies the name of God to Christ; e. g. Acts 20: 28, and 1 Tim. 3: 16. In regard to this latter text however, it appears to me a plain case, that the authorities, which Griesbach himself has adduced, would fairly lead to a decision different from his own, respecting the genuineness of the reading *Θεός*. I will not attempt to weigh them here, as I feel no desire to press into my service witnesses of a character at all dubious. I admit the merit of Griesbach, in his critical edition of the New Testament. I believe he was a man, who would not willingly or consciously misrepresent either facts or arguments, either for or against any reading. But the work which he undertook was too great to be accomplished by one person, or even by one whole generation of critics. Dr. Lawrence, in his Essay upon the Classification of Manuscripts by Griesbach, has rendered it more than probable, that Griesbach's account of facts

is not unfrequently very erroneous, (not through design but from human infirmity), and that the principles by which he estimated the value of Manuscripts, and of course the genuineness of particular readings, are some of them fundamentally erroneous. But Griesbach is not the only recent editor of a critical New Testament, to which critics attach importance. Matthäi, whom Middleton calls the best Greek scholar that ever edited a Greek Testament, published at Riga (between A. D. 1782—1788) a critical Testament of 12 volumes, which approaches much nearer our common Textus Receptus than the edition of Griesbach; with whom, indeed, he is often at variance. Eichhorn, (after giving a high character of this edition of Matthäi, and remarking that in his maxims, respecting the formation of the N. Test. text, this editor differs very much from Griesbach and some others), says, that "for a long time he had followed the middle path between the two parties." (Bibliothek, Band ii. St. 2. s. 311). On this subject his judgment in general was both enlightened and sound.

The whole system of classifying manuscripts, which lies at the very foundation of all Griesbach's decisions in regard to the text, is rejected by Matthäi as worthless; and Dr. Lawrence has, in the Essay above mentioned, made an attack upon the same classification, which renders very questionable the principles of it, or at least the application of those principles as made by Griesbach.

Professor Knapp of Halle also published a Greek Testament, the text of which is independent of Griesbach's, although it approximates to it. This edition has been much esteemed for its punctuation, order of words, accentuation, and spirituation; and it still has a large circulation; although at present it is giving place to that of Hahn.

The critical editions of Lachmann and of Tischendorf have also a large run, both of which are in a good measure independent of Griesbach.

I acknowledge this is digression. But it may be useful to those, who are in the habit of attributing so much weight to

Griesbach's decisions, to know that they are far from being uncontroverted, by many of the best critics among his own countrymen. I know of no commentator of note, who has made Griesbach's text his basis, except Paulus; and he has reëxamined all his decisions.

To return, however, to our subject; we do not want, and feel no disposition to use, either of the texts referred to above as proof texts in the question before us.*

There is another class of texts, which I have not hitherto mentioned, because the certainty of their meaning is commonly thought to be less capable of demonstration, than that of others which I have produced. I refer to such texts as Eph. 5: 5. *Ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ Θεοῦ*, "in the kingdom of Christ and God." Titus 2: 13. *Προσδεχόμενοι τὴν μακαρίαν ἐλπίδα καὶ ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς δόξης τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.* "Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearance of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ." 2 Tim. 4: 1. *Διαμαρτύρομαι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ μέλλοντος κρίνειν ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς, κατὰ τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ·* "I adjure you before God, even Jesus Christ, who will judge the quick and the dead at his appearance and kingdom." 2 Pet. 1: 1. . . . . *τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ·* "of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

The mode here proposed of translating these texts, is certainly in conformity with the Greek idiom. Middleton (on the Article) thinks it absolutely *essential* to it. For although proper names and abstract nouns, in such a connection as *Θεός* and *Χριστός* here, may take the article before the first noun and omit it before the second, and yet designate *different* things and persons; yet if words, which are *attributives*, omit the article in such a case, they exhibit evidence that they are to be connected with a preceding noun, and are the predicates of it, and not significant of something separate.

* As to 1 Tim. 3: 16, Dr. Henderson seems to have settled the point diplomatically in favour of its genuineness, in an Essay of his, which was republished in the Biblical Repository, Vol. II. p. 1, seq.

E. g. in the first case; Eph. 5: 5, "The kingdom of Christ and God," according to this rule would mean "*of Christ who is God.*" In the second instance, Tit. 2: 13, the meaning would be, "of the great God who is our Saviour," etc.

Mr. Wordsworth, a few years since, instituted a most laborious investigation of the Greek fathers, to see whether the idiom which respects the article here was admitted into their writings; and whether they ever understood more than *one person* to be designated by such expressions. The result I will give in his own words, (p. 132). "I have observed more, I am persuaded, than a thousand instances of the form *ὁ Χριστὸς καὶ Θεός* (Eph. 5: 5); some hundreds of instances of *ὁ μέγας θεὸς καὶ σώτηρ* (Tit. 2: 13); and not fewer than several thousands of the form *ὁ θεὸς καὶ σώτηρ* (2 Pet. 1: 1); while in no single case have I seen, where the sense could be determined, any one of them used *but only of one person.*"

After all, if there were no other evidence of the divinity of Christ in the New Testament, than what depended solely on these texts, one might perhaps hesitate concerning the subject. But when I consider that the method of translating, here proposed, is conformable to the Greek idiom, and must be adopted in various other passages, (e. g. Rom. 15: 6. Eph. 5: 20. James 1: 27), and if adopted in these, will give them a sense conformable to that of other parts of the sacred volume, I must confess the evidence which these passages afford, if not decisive, at least serves to confirm the testimony of those other texts. Specially is this the case, in regard to the text in Titus; for where is the *appearing* of God the Father ever spoken of by the New Testament writers? It is *Christ* who has *appeared* to execute vengeance upon the Jewish nation, and who will again *appear* at the general judgment. The *appearance of the great God and Saviour* seems to be fairly applied to Christ.

Thus much for the texts, which bestow upon Christ the appellation of *God*, with adjuncts that show in what sense the word *God* must be understood, according to the common rules of interpreting language. I come now,

II. To examine another class of texts, which attribute to Christ *equality* with God, or that *power*, and *dignity*, and *honor*, which belong appropriately to God.

Phil. 2: 5—8. *Τοῦτο γὰρ φρονείσθω ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ· ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων, οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ, ἀλλ' ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε, μορφὴν δούλου λάβων, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος, καὶ σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος, ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτόν, γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ.* "Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus; who, being in the condition of God, did not regard his equality with God as an object of solicitous desire, but taking the condition of a servant, being made after the similitude of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Such is the rendering, which, after much examination, I am persuaded the Greek of this passage not only admits but demands. I will state my reasons for dissenting from the common method, in which either Trinitarians or Unitarians have translated it.

Our common version runs thus: "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but humbled himself, etc." This version seems to render nugatory, or at least irrelevant, a part of the apostle's reasoning in the passage. He is enforcing the principle of Christian humility on the Philippians. In order to urge this in the most effectual manner, he proposes to them the example of Christ: "Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ." What was this? It was manifested by the fact, that though essentially divine (*ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ*), he did not eagerly retain his divine condition, but assumed the station or condition of a servant (*μορφὴν δούλου*). Here the relevancy of his reasoning is sufficiently plain. But how was it any proof or example of *humility*, that "he did not think it robbery to be equal with God?"

Besides, the Greek will not fairly bear this construction. *Ἁρπαγμός*, translated *robbery*, does not here signify *an act of*

robbery, but *res rapta*, or rather *res avide diripienda et vindicanda*, i. e. something which is eagerly to be seized and appropriated. Moreover ἁρπαγμός, which our translators have placed *next* to the verb ἡγήσατο, does not by the rules of syntax belong there. The Greek syntax would place the words thus, as to their sense: οὐκ ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ ἁρπαγμόν; literally, "he regarded not, or he deemed not, the being equal to God as ἁρπαγμόν, i. e. as a thing to be greedily sought or appropriated.

For these reasons, I cannot believe that our common version gives the true sense of the passage. And for similar reasons, I feel compelled to reject the version so common among some Unitarians: "He did not think of the robbery of being equal with God." The objections to it are, that it translates ἁρπαγμόν here as designating the *action of robbery;* and that οὐκ ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ ἁπαγμόν can never be proved to mean: He thought not *of* the robbery *of being equal* with God. The verb ἡγήσατο is not susceptible of such a meaning as *thought of*, i. e. did not aspire to, imagine, form expectations of, etc. In its primary sense it signifies *to lead, to be prœminent*, etc.; in its secondary sense, *to esteem, judge, regard, repute*, etc. To render οὐκ ἡγήσατο ἁρπαγμόν, *he did not think of the robbery*, would therefore be violating the obvious principles of the Greek language. To justify in any measure such a version, the passage must run thus, οὐ ΤΟΝ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο ΤΟΥ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ.* And as no ancient manuscript or version has given a hint of such a form of the text, it seems to be placed beyond fair debate, that the translation now in question cannot be admitted.

Both our translators and Unitarians appear, generally, to have mistaken the import of the word μορφή in this passage. On the one hand, μορφή does not seem to me at all parallel with the *brightness* (ἀπαύγασμα) and *express image* (χαρακτήρ), which are applied to the Son in Heb. 1: 3. These

* Even then οὐκ ἡγήσατο could not be rendered *thought not of*. The word does not permit this sense.

words designate the glory of the incarnate Messiah, who had appeared "in these last days," and spoken to men. They express the same view of Christ which John gives (1: 14), when he says: "We beheld his [Christ's] glory, verily the glory of the only begotten of the Father;" and this glory was seen after the 'Word became flesh and dwelt among us.' Comparison then of *μορφὴ Θεοῦ* with these passages, will not ascertain its meaning; for to Christ belonged the *μορφὴ Θεοῦ*, *before* he humbled himself and took upon him the form of a servant. Indeed, in occupying the condition of a servant, (if I may so express the Greek *ἐκένωσε σεαυτόν*), consisted his humiliation.

A fair examination of *μορφή*, either generally or in special relation to the passage before us, will end, as I must believe, in the conviction, that the word is not unfrequently synonymous with *φύσις* (nature) and *οὐσία* (being). The proofs which Schleusner has offered of this are sufficient. (Lex. in voc. *μορφή*). But the proof of what it means in the passage before us, is too plain to be easily mistaken. If you say, *μορφὴ Θεοῦ* means only a *similitude* or *resemblance* of God in moral qualities, as we speak of Christians resembling God, then I ask, whether his humiliation consisted in depressing, or subjecting to a lower station, the moral qualities which Christ possessed.

Does *μορφὴ Θεοῦ* mean then a resemblance to God in respect to *office*, even as magistrates are sometimes called *gods*? Not so; for on the supposition that Christ was only a *finite* being, what office did he lay aside in order to become incarnate? If Christ be only a created being, who were his subjects, and what was his dominion, before his mediatorial kingdom commenced by the event of his incarnation?

But this is not all. If *μορφή* mean only *similitude*, then what is the sense of the next clause, where Christ is said to have taken upon him the *μορφὴν δούλου*? That he bore merely a *resemblance* to a servant, i. e. to *one who obeys*, or is in a humble station; or that he did *actually* take the condition of one who was in a humble and depressed state,

and persevere in it to the very death of the cross? The latter must be admitted, unless we hearken to the doctrine of the Docetæ, who taught, that Christ was a man in *appearance* only, and not in reality. If *μορφὴ δουλοῦ*, then, means the condition or state of one who is humbled or depressed, and subjected to the command of others, does not *μορφὴ Θεοῦ* mean the condition or state of one who is truly divine?

After all, it should be sacredly remembered, that on such a subject as this, human language, (made up of terms invented to express the ideas of finite and mutable beings about finite and mutable objects), is of course incompetent fully to designate the mode of union between the divine and human natures. I must regard the language here, and in all other passages which respect this awe-inspiring subject, as only an *approximation* toward describing what exists in the Divinity, or is done by him. He who was in the condition of God, and equal with God, i. e. divine, *ἐκένωσε ἑαυτόν*· which we translate: *exinanivit seipsum*, or *made himself of no reputation*. Yet how incompetent must these translations be! So far as Christ is the immutable God, he cannot *change*, i. e. he cannot *divest himself* of his essential perfections. He cannot cease to be omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, etc. But he may veil the brightness of his glories for a time, by assuming to himself a union with the human nature, and making this the organ through which he displays his perfections, during the time of the incarnation. Does the natural sun cease to shine—are his beams extinguished, when an intervening cloud obscures for a while his lustre? Or is the sun in any measure changed?

In reply to a multitude of questions, with which you and others press Trinitarians on this subject, we may ask: Because God is omnipotent, does it follow that the whole of that omnipotence must be every moment exerted? If not, (and who will refuse assent to this?) then why may he not have veiled his glories for a time in the incarnate Saviour, and still retain all his essential perfections unchanged? Is

it too much to say, that he *may* have done so? I believe the text in question decides that he *did* so.

I approach such a subject, however, with solemn awe; and never do I feel my own weakness and ignorance more intensely, than while endeavouring to think upon it. The familiar, I had almost said irreverential manner, in which some speak and write respecting this mystery, is calculated, I freely acknowledge, to excite painful emotions. On the one hand, it would seem, if we are to credit one mode of representation, that the greatest portion of Christ's humiliation consisted in his having renounced and absolutely laid aside his divinity, during the time of the incarnation; and that *as God*, in this diminished condition, (if I may so speak), he did actually expire upon the cross. All the powers of language are exhausted, in order to show how great must be the sufferings and condescension of Christ, in undergoing such a degradation as this. On the other hand, some who revolt from these mistaken representations, verge to the other extreme. Lest they should degrade the divine nature of Christ, they are so careful to separate the human nature from it, that one is compelled to suppose, that the man Jesus had simply a higher degree of inspiration and communion with God than other prophets. The New Testament does not seem to me to justify either of these extremes.

A thousand questions may be raised here; a thousand difficulties suggested, which no sober man will undertake to answer. The history of past ages exhibits an appalling picture of disputes about the person of Christ; all springing from the denial of *facts* revealed in the New Testament, or from the unhallowed curiosity of men who desired to know what God has not revealed. The very last age witnessed a dispute in Germany between the theologians of Giessen and Tübingen, whether the humiliation (κένωσις) of Christ consisted "in abstinence from both the direct and reflex use of divine majesty;" or in the "occultation of divine majesty;" a dispute which agitated the Lutheran Church to the very centre.

The humble inquirer after truth, who once is brought clearly to see the boundaries of human knowledge, will shrink from disputations of such a nature, and pour forth his earnest supplications to God, that the simple verities which the Scriptures reveal may be believed on the authority of God; while the *manner* in which the facts revealed for our credence exist, is left with him "whose ways are unsearchable and whose judgments are past finding out."

I have used the freedom of letter-writing, in this discussion; I can hardly call it digression, as it is so nearly connected with the explanation of the text which I am examining. Will you now permit me to repeat, that the version which would correspond best with the real meaning of the passage in question, must express the following ideas: "Who being of divine nature or condition, did not eagerly seek to retain his equality with God, but took on himself a humble condition, etc." In this way, and in this only, does the passage appear to be consistent with the apostle's argument and design, at least appropriate to them; and in this way only, can the Greek be fairly and grammatically rendered.

With the passage that has now been considered, several others seem to me to agree, in respect to general import. E. g. John 5: 19, "Whatsoever things he [the Father] doeth, the same doeth the Son likewise;" i. e. he has the same power as the Father. And when it is said in the context: "The Son doeth nothing by (or *of*, ἀπό, ἀφ') himself, except he see the Father do it;" I understand the meaning to be, that the Jews had no reason to believe that Christ had any disposition to break the divine commandments, (of which they had so frequently accused him), because he acted in entire concert with the divine purposes and commands, and had no separate interests of his own. Any other interpretation than this, makes the passage inept, and wholly irrelevant to the case in hand.

Several passages there are, of the like nature with the one just considered, which assert a *dependence* of the Son upon the Father, but all of which relate to his mediatorial state,

when he had assumed a human nature. Such are the passages which declare that Christ was taught, shown, instructed, and sent or commissioned, by the Father; e. g. John 5: 20, 26, 27, 30, 36. John 6: 38. In John 6: 57 is a strong expression of this nature: "As the living Father hath sent me, and *I live by the Father;* so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Now here Christ represents himself as *living by the Father*, that is, through his power or influence, in like manner as his disciples are spiritually nourished by him. But all this evidently belongs to his *mediatorial* person and nature; and of this it is plainly true. The passages which teach us that Christ was *guided* or *instructed* by the Father, in all the revelations which he made, are somewhat frequent, specially in the works of John; e. g. Rev. 1: 1. John 12: 49. 8: 38. 14: 10, 24. 15: 10, 15. But, intermingled with these, (and, on the ground of Christ's *two-fold* nature, easily interpreted), are others of a very different tenor. For example; he says (John 16: 7 sq.), that he will send the *Paraclete*, i. e. the Spirit of truth, to teach and comfort his disciples; and then he adds: "He [the Spirit] shall *glorify* me; for he shall receive of *mine*, and shall show it unto you." Nor is this all. He goes on to say: "All things that the Father hath are *mine;* therefore said I, he shall take of *mine*, and show it unto you." Very different is the tenor of the meaning here, from that of the words of Paul, when he tells the Corinthians, that "all things are theirs." The apostle means, that all the privileges and blessings of the gospel with all its teachers, and all its hopes and promises, are theirs, and that they and all these belong to one common Lord, i. e. Christ; also that Christ himself, as the mediator of the new dispensation, and according to the economy of grace, belongs to God, or is subordinate to him, 1 Cor. 3: 21—23. The apostle says all this, to quell party spirit and the assumption of superiority among the Corinthians. But when Christ promises to his disciples, first, that *he* will send the *Paraclete;* and then says that the Holy Spirit will *glorify him;* and finally adds, that "all which the Father hath is his;" can

we reasonably suppose that any pious man, nay that any *created* being who is filled with the fear of God, would make use of such language as this? To speak of *himself* as *glorified* by the Spirit, and as *possessing all things* in such a sense that the Spirit is said to *take* and to *receive* of the things which are his, and to show them to the disciples—is this language becoming in a mere human being, yea, decorous in any measure for any *created* being whatever? The Holy Spirit then is to take of what belongs to him who is a created and dependent being, in order to furnish himself for the work of guiding and comforting the disciples! It is improbable—nay, it is morally impossible, for any created being filled with reverential awe of God, and with deep humility, to express himself in such manner while in the use of his sober senses. Such language, in his mouth, would amount to little or nothing short of blasphemy; if blasphemy may mean the saying of that which detracts from God, and elevates the creature to the rank of a divine being. I venture to say, that no theory of doctrine which denies the *Godhead* of Christ, can fairly make out an exegesis of this language, which is consistent with fact, with piety, and with reason.

Again, in that last memorable prayer of Jesus, recorded in John xvii., when speaking of his disciples, he says to the Father: "All mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am *glorified* in them," v. 10. Here is even additional reason for applying the remarks just made. Such claims forsooth as these, on the part of a mere man, or a mere creature! How can I admit this, and admit that the being who uttered it was full of reverence and humility, or even that he was in a state of sanity? I confess myself utterly at a loss to reconcile this with any *Unitarian* theory, of which I have any knowledge.

Of the same nature is a text already cited above: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," John 5: 17. In other words, (as Jesus was accused of violating the Sabbath): 'My Father suspends not his operations on this holy day; and I have a right to continue mine on the same ground.' If this be admitted, then is the justification of Jesus complete. But what human or merely created being could place his justifi-

cation on such ground as this? The Jews immediately accused him of blasphemy. They were in the right, if he was nothing more than a mere man. But how does he vindicate himself? By telling them that they had wholly mistaken the meaning of his expressions? Not at all. He merely tells them that he follows the example of the Father, and that he is commissioned by him to do the greatest of miracles, to raise the dead, and to judge the world; and all this, in order that "all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." He not only asserts, then, his right to supersede the law of the Sabbath, but his right to share in the same honours which are to be paid to the Father.

I must confess, that passages like these make a deeper impression on my mind, than many a passage which seems directly to assert that Christ is God. For such passages as those before us show that the truth in question was inwrought into the mind of Jesus, and that he was in readiness to develop it, directly or indirectly, on every proper occasion.

John 5: 21—23. "For as the Father raiseth the dead and restoreth them to life, so also the Son restoreth to life whom he pleases. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, *that all men might honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.*"

Is there not here an equality of power and honour, ascribed to the Father and Son? The Son is introduced as "head over all things;" but could he be such a head, could "*all* judgment be committed to him," if at the same time he was not divine, and consequently omniscient? It is perfectly plain, that in so far as the "*committing* of judgment to the Son" is concerned, it must be to the *mediatorial* person; to one who in respect to office is subordinate to God. But in so far as *qualifications* requisite to perform the duties which that commitment requires, are concerned, the Saviour is divine; and the honour to be claimed by him, is the same with that which the Divinity himself claims. It matters not whether you interpret this of *obedience* to be rendered to the Son, or of *homage* to be paid to him. Multitudes of prophets,

as commissioned by God, have borne his messages of mercy and of judgment to his people; but to whom among them all, did he grant the privilege of being honoured as himself? Or to what *created* being shall the glory of the blessed God be rendered, without infringing upon the fundamental principles of both the Jewish and the Christian religion?

You will expect me, perhaps, to adduce John 10: 30, "I and my Father are one." It is a clear case, that the Jews here seem to have understood Christ as claiming equality with God, or rather claiming to be God; see v. 33. But I am not satisfied, that the manner in which *they* often expounded his words, is a sure guide for our interpretation of them at the present time. The malignant disposition which they frequently displayed, may well lead us to suspect, that they would, if possible, put such a construction on his words as would subject him to the imputation of blasphemy, or of rebellion against the Roman government. I would expound the words of Christ, therefore, independently of any construction which his embittered enemies put upon them. And in the present case, it seems to me, that the meaning of "I and my Father are one," is simply: 'I and my Father are united or one in counsel, design, and operation.'

So in John 17: 20, 21, Christ prays that "all who shall believe on him *may be one*. As thou Father," continues he, "art in me, and I in thee, so they also *may be one* in us;" i. e. that the disciples may have the "same mind which was in Christ Jesus," may copy after his example, and may be united in the temper of their souls to him, as he is to God, and thus may *be one* with the Father and with him.

So also, in Gal. 3: 28, Christians of different ranks and nations are said to *be one* in Christ; and 1 Cor. 3: 8, he that planteth and he that watereth *are one*, i. e. they have the same affections and designs, they are united to accomplish the same object. In the same manner Cicero says: Unus fiat e pluribus, i. e. *many constitute one*, when persons are united in temper and pursuits; De Offic. I. 17.

From the consideration of those texts, which ascribe to Christ, in a general sense, equality with God or divine power and honours, let us now turn,

III. To the examination of those, which assert or imply, that *particular divine attributes, or works, belong to him.*

1. *Omniscience* is ascribed to Christ.

Matt. 11: 27. "All things are delivered to me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."

If, in this passage, the same *omniscience* be not ascribed to the Son as to the Father, I am unable to make out satisfactorily what the meaning of it is. In the latter clause of the verse, men are declared to be entirely dependent on the Son for that knowledge of the Father which is revealed, i. e. he only is capable of making this revelation. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten who dwelleth in the bosom of the Father *he hath revealed him,*" John 1: 18. At the same time I concede it to be *possible*, that the knowledge here spoken of may be merely that which is intended to be revealed in the gospel.

John 6: 46. *Οὐχ ὅτι τὸν πατέρα τις ἑώρακεν, εἰ μὴ ὁ ὢν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ· οὗτος ἑώρακε τὸν πατέρα.* "Because that no man hath seen the Father, save he who is of God; he hath seen the Father." The word *ἑώρακε* here does not mean *to see with bodily eyes*, but *with the mental eye*, i. e. to know. What but omniscience could be adequate to the knowledge, which is here predicated of Christ? And is it a satisfactory explanation of the text, to say, that the knowledge here meant, is simply that which is conveyed in the instructions of the gospel?

In the same manner, the knowledge of the most intimate secrets of the human heart is ascribed to Christ. John 2: 24, 25, "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man." John 6: 64,

"But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him."

Acts 1: 24. "And they prayed, and said: Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen." That *Lord* (κύριος) here means *Christ*, seems to me very plain from vs. 21, 22 (comp. v. 6), of the context. Besides, this is the *common* appellation of the Saviour in the Acts of the Apostles. The appeal made in this case respects the *choice* of an apostle. "Show, Lord," say the apostles, "which of these two *thou* hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and *apostleship*." Is there any room to doubt here, that the apostle did appeal to the same Lord who had chosen them, beseeching him to designate who should fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Judas? There can be none.

1 Cor. 4: 4, 5, "For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God." That *Lord* (κύριος) here means *Christ*, is plain, both from the office of judging ascribed to him, and from his *coming* to judgment. Without citing numerous other passages, which confessedly represent Christ as the final judge of all the human race, permit me here to ask: Is it possible for any being who is not *omniscient*, to judge the universe of intelligent creatures? Can he for thousands of years, (possibly of ages), be present everywhere, and know all that is transacted? Can he penetrate the recesses of the human heart? Can he remember the whole character and actions of countless myriads so diverse in talents, temper, circumstances, and situation, and yet be finite, be neither omnipresent nor omniscient? God claims it as his distinguishing and peculiar prerogative, that he knows the secrets of the human heart, (Jer. 17: 10); what then must he be, who knows the secrets of all hearts, at all

times, and in all worlds? If he be not God, the proof that the Father is God, must also be defective; and we have the question again to dispute with the Manicheans, whether *Jehovah* be not a limited and imperfect being.

But, you will say: 'Christ acts as judge by *delegated* authority; why not then by knowledge imparted to him?' He does indeed *act* as judge by delegated authority, because it is in his *mediatorial* capacity that he acts as judge; but to *act* as judge is one thing, to be *qualified* for such an office is another. Exaltation as mediator constitutes him judge in that capacity; *omnipresence* and *omniscience* only can qualify him for the duties of that station. And can omniscience be *imparted?* We may as well say *omnipotence* or *self-existence* can be imparted. There is, and there can be, but *one* God; and a second omniscient being (omniscient simply by knowledge *imparted*), would force us into all the absurdities of polytheism.

Rev. 2: 23. "And all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." The same person speaks here, who "was dead and is alive," i. e. Christ, (ch. 1: 18). The sense of the passage is too plain to need any comment.

To conclude this head; when I compare such passages as those above cited with the description of omniscience, how can I doubt that the New Testament writers mean to ascribe the *knowledge of all things* to Christ? To say that whatsoever pertains to God or man is known by any being, is to predicate omniscience of that being. Compare now with this the knowledge which God ascribes to himself only, in Jer. 17: 9, 10: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

2. *Divine power* is ascribed to Christ.

Phil. 3: 21, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may

be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

Compare now with this passage, 1 Cor. 15: 26—28, where the same language is applied to God the Father. And if "to subdue all things to himself," (*ὑποτάξαι τὰ πάντα ἑαυτῷ*), be not characteristic of omnipotence in Phil. 3: 21 when applied to Christ, why should it be so when applied in 1 Cor. xv. to the Father?

Heb. 1: 3. "*Ος (ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ), δι' ἑαυτοῦ καθαρισμὸν ποιησάμενος τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς·* "Who, (being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power), when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high." The word *φέρων* which is translated *upholding*, means *preserving, directing, governing.* Thus Chrysostom: *φέρων*, says he, *κυβέρνων διαπίπτοντα συγκρατῶν*, i. e. governing, preserving things perishable. So the corresponding Hebrew word נָשָׂא, Isa. 46: 3. 63: 9.

In John 10: 16, Christ says, that "he has power to lay down his life, and to resume it again." In other places the resurrection of Jesus is ascribed to God; Acts 2: 24, 32. 3: 15. 5: 30. 1 Cor. 6: 14. 15: 15.

In 2 Pet. 1: 3, *divine power* (*θεῖα δύναμις*) is ascribed to Christ; comp. v. 16.

Most decisive, however, of divine power belonging to Christ, are those passages above, which ascribe to him the creation of the universe. This is the distinguishing characteristic of Jehovah. Jer. 10: 10—16. "But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting King; at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them: The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under

these heavens. He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion. When he uttereth his voice there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures. Every man is brutish in his knowledge; every founder is confounded by the graven image; for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. They are vanity, and the work of errors; in the time of their visitation they shall perish. *The portion of Jacob is not like them; for he is the former of all things*, and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: the LORD OF HOSTS is his name."

Acts 14: 15. "Sirs, why do ye these things? we also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the *living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.*"

Whatever views other persons may entertain, who read such passages and compare them with the creative power ascribed to Christ, I cannot but admit, with the apostle, that "he who *built* all things *is God.*"

3. *Eternity is ascribed to Christ.*

That those passages of Scripture, which speak of Christ's existence before the creation of the world, do not explicitly *assert* his eternity, I have already suggested. But then, it is difficult to conceive that they do not *imply* eternity. "For," says Doederlein. (Inst. Theol. i. p. 390,) "to exist before the beginning of the world, what can it mean but to exist from eternity?" Passages of this nature are the following; viz. John 1: 1, "*In the beginning* was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." 1 John 1: 2, "For the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that *eternal Life* which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." John 17: 5, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee *before the world was.*" John 17:

24, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me *before the foundation of the world.*"

But specially do I apprehend that Rev. 22: 13 is decisive on this subject. Ἐγὼ τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω, ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος. That it is Christ who here speaks, is clear; for, (1) In the preceding verse he says: "Behold *I come* quickly." (2) In the sixteenth verse the same person says: "I Jesus have sent mine angel," etc. Now the same description that is here applied to Christ, is given of the eternity of God in ch. 20: 5, 6; comp. vs. 7 and 3. To know still more fully what this form of expression means, we must recur to the Old Test., where we find it divested of its technical shape. In Isa. 44: 6, Jehovah says: "I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no God;" i. e. eternity distinguishes me from all that are falsely called gods. So in Isa. 48: 12, after declaring that he will not suffer his name to be polluted, nor give his glory to another, he adds: "I am he [i. e. the true God]; I am the first, and I also am the last."

Now if the same things be asserted of Christ, (as plainly they are in the texts under consideration), how can we avoid the conclusion, that the holy apostle meant to assert his eternal existence?

4. *Divine honours and worship are ascribed to Christ.*

John 5: 23. "That all men might honour the Son even as they honour the Father." On this text I have before remarked (p. 95) in another connexion.

Heb. 1: 6. "Let all the angels of God worship him."

The word *worship*, it is said, has two significations, viz. *obeisance* and *spiritual homage*. This is true; and the first of these meanings often presents itself in the Old Test., and (as I am willing to concede) in the Gospels. Many who worshipped Christ, while he sojourned among men, that is, prostrated themselves before him, probably knew or acknowledged nothing of his divine nature. But what shall we say

of the *angels?* Are *they* ignorant of his true nature? And is not the worship which they who are pure spirits pay, of course *spiritual,* and not simple obeisance?

Phil. 2: 10, 11. "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

"Things in heaven, earth, and under the earth," is a common periphrasis of the Hebrew and New Testament writers, for the *universe,* (*τὸ πᾶν* or *τὰ πάντα*). What can be meant by things in heaven, i. e. beings in heaven, bowing the knee to Jesus, if *spiritual* worship be not meant? What other worship can heaven render? And if the worship of Christ in heaven be spiritual, should not that of others, who ought to be in temper united with them, be spiritual also? And when it is added, that this worship shall be "to the glory of God the Father," I understand the sentiment to be, that Jesus in his mediatorial character is the proper object of universal adoration; but inasmuch as this mediatorship was appointed by God the Father, and has a peculiar connexion with and relation to him, so the worship paid to Christ as the Mediator, should redound to the glory of God the Father as well as to his own.

Rom. 10: 9—14. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith: Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

The Lord *on whose name they are to call*, is plainly and clearly the Lord Christ; for he is the same in whom *they are to believe*, (vs. 11, 14). And this Lord (Christ) on whom they are to call, and in whom they are to believe, is *Κύριος πάντων*, *universal Lord*, and therefore able to bestow the blessings which they need.

Rev. 5: 8—14. "And when he [i. e. Christ, see vs. 6, 7], took the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sung a new song, saying: Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice: Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying: Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the *Lamb*, forever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever."

If this be not *spiritual* worship—and if Christ be not the object of it here; I must confess myself unable to produce or imagine a case, where worship can be called spiritual and divine, or where it can more plainly be attributed to Christ.

Is it not equally clear that the apostles and primitive martyrs worshipped Christ? And was not the practice of worshipping him, recognized among other Christians? Let us see:

Acts 7: 59, 60. "And they stoned Stephen, making invo-

cation (*ἐπικαλούμενον*) and saying: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice: Lord, lay not this sin to their charge! And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

Now here is a dying martyr, who is expressly said to "be filled with the Holy Ghost," and to enjoy the vision of the heavenly world, and of the Saviour who was there; he is in his last moments too—on the very verge of eternity; here is such a martyr, committing his departing spirit *into the hands of the Lord Jesus*, in the very same language and with the same confidence, with which Jesus, when expiring upon the cross, committed his spirit into the hands of the Father. This expiring disciple also implores forgiveness for his murderers. Of whom does he implore it? Of the same Lord Jesus. Can our departing spirits be committed to any being, and the forgiveness of sin be expected of him, unless he has omnipotence and supreme authority? And can a dying martyr, with his eyes fixed on the very vision of God, and his soul filled with the Holy Ghost, ask and pray amiss?

2 Cor. 12: 8, 9. *Ὑπὲρ τοῦτου τρὶς τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα, ἵνα ἀποστῇ ἀπ' ἐμοῦ· καὶ εἴρηκέ μοι· Ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου· ἡ γὰρ δύναμίς μου ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελειοῦται. Ἥδιστα οὐν μᾶλλον καυχήσομαι ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου, ἵνα ἐπισκηνώσῃ ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ.* "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me: My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

The *Lord* whom Paul here *besought*, is plainly Christ; for this same Lord, in answer to the apostle's supplication, says: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength (*ἡ δύναμις μου*) is perfected in weakness." Then the apostle immediately subjoins: "Most gladly then would I rejoice in my infirmities, that the *strength of* CHRIST (*ἡ δύναμις Χριστοῦ*), may rest upon me." A clearer case that Christ was the object of the apostle's repeated prayer, cannot well be presented.

1 Thess. 3: 11, 12. "Now God himself even our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you."

Can any distinction be here made, between the rank of those who are addressed in supplication by the apostle? And does not the twelfth verse plainly show, that the supplication of the apostle is specially directed to the Lord, i. e. to Christ?

2 Thess. 2: 16, 17. "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work."

Here the order of the persons, to whom supplication is made, is the reverse of that in the last instance quoted; which shows that nothing depends on the *order*, but that it was a matter of indifference with the apostle, which was placed first; the supplication being equally addressed to the Father and to Christ.

Rom. 1: 7. "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Here the same blessings are solicited and expected, from Christ and from the Father. See the same formula repeated in 1 Cor. 1: 3. 2 Cor. 1: 2.

Acts 1: 24. "And they prayed and said: Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen."

That *Lord* here means the Lord Jesus, seems evident from vs. 21, 22. It is the usual appellation, moreover, which the book of Acts gives to the Saviour. (See above, p. 104.)

2 Tim. 4: 14. "The Lord reward him according to his works!" Again vs. 17, 18: "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear:

and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." (Comp. 3: 11). Usage hardly admits a doubt here, that *Lord* means Christ.

Nor can I separate from religious invocation, trust, and confidence, such expressions as these: "Then Peter said: Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk," Acts 3: 6. Nor can I see how the solemn adjuration by Christ (*ἐν χριστῷ*), which the apostle uses in Rom. 9: 1. 1 Tim. 2: 7 (text. recept.), can be separated from religious invocation or appeal.

We must add to all these instances of worship, the fact that Christians were so habituated to address their supplications to Christ, that the expression, "they who invoke Christ," became, as it would seem, a kind of *proper name*, by which they were in primitive times designated as Christians.

Thus Paul (1 Cor. 1: 2) addresses himself to all *ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἐν πάντι τόπῳ, who invoke the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,* IN EVERY PLACE. That the verb *ἐπικαλέω* is an appropriate one to designate the act of prayer, will not be questioned. The literal translation of it is *to invoke.* The simple meaning of the passage is: 'I address myself to all Christians.' But instead of using the name *Christians* directly, the apostle uses a periphrasis and says: *To all the invokers of Christ,* i. e. to those who pray to him, meaning the same as *ἁγίοις, κλητοῖς*, etc., in the context. He has signified also, that the practice of *invoking* Christ was not confined to Corinth. He addresses "those who pray to Christ in *every place,*" (*ἐν πάντι τόπῳ*).

Exactly in the same manner does Ananias describe Christians, when the Lord Jesus bade him go to instruct and comfort Saul. "Lord," said he, "I have heard of many concerning this man, what things he has done (*τοῖς ἁγίοις σου*) to thy saints at Jerusalem; and even now, he has a commis-

sion from the high priest to bind all (*τοὺς ἐπικαλουμένους τὸ ὄνομά σου*) those who invoke thy name," i. e. all Christians. See the same thing repeated in v. 21.

The very heathen, in the primitive age of Christianity, little as they knew about Christians, discovered that they made Christ an object of worship. Says Pliny, in writing to Trajan: "Carmen Christo, quasi Deo, soliti essent [i. e. Christiani] dicere secum invicem. They (Christians) sing in social worship a hymn to Christ as a God." (Lib. X. Epis. 97.)

Eusebius too, (Ecc. Hist. v. 28), in writing against the Artemonites, appeals to the ancient songs of Christians, thus: "Whatever psalms and hymns were composed by faithful brethren, from the beginning, *praise Christ the word of God.*" Can any example of a church in the apostolic age, which did not practice thus, be produced?

Did not the Saviour give his disciples a general precept and encouragement, to make him the object of prayer? "If ye shall ask anything in my name," i. e. as my disciples, on my account, said he to the apostles, "I will accomplish it," (*ἐγὼ ποιήσω*); John 14: 13, 14. The disciples appear to me to have understood this, as directing that he should be regarded by them as the special object of prayer. Hence, instead of finding few or no examples of prayer to Christ, in the history of the primitive Christians as exhibited in the New Testament, I find more of this nature than of any other.

When I have contemplated the precepts which encourage prayer to Christ and the worship of him, both by the inhabitants of the heavenly world and by the churches on earth, I then compare these things with the exclusive worship and trust which Jehovah claims to himself. Is. 45: 22, 23, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every

tongue shall swear." Is. 42: 8, "I am the Lord; that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." Jer. 17: 5—7, "Thus saith the Lord: Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord; for he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." Matt. 4: 10, "Then saith Jesus unto him: Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written: Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and HIM ONLY shalt thou serve."

I am ready now to ask, whether I can avoid coming to the conclusion, either that Christ is truly divine, inasmuch as he is so often represented as the object of worship; or that the sacred writers have mistaken this great point, and led us to that which must be considered as idolatry. And yet the worship of Christ is placed, as it would seem, in *opposition* to that of idols, 1 Cor. 8: 4—6. That Christianity utterly and forever renounces all idolatry—all polytheism, in a word, everything inconsistent with the worship of one only living and true God, is a point so plain and so universally conceded, that I shall not dwell for a moment upon it.

Were it not that I fear becoming tedious, by detailing my reasons for believing in the divine nature of Christ, I should add a great number of texts, which require us with all the heart to *love* him; to *obey* him; to *confide* in him; and to *commit ourselves* to him; in such a manner as I can never persuade myself to do, with respect to any being who is not God. The New Testament tells me that my consolation, my privilege, my happiness, must be derived from *trusting* in Christ. But can I trust myself to a *finite* being, when I have an *infinite, almighty, all-sufficient* GOD to whom I may go? Shall I be satisfied with a mere mite, when more than all the mines of Peru are set before me?

I might also add those texts, some of which are very

striking ones, where, in the New Testament, the very same things are applied to Christ, which in the Old Testament are affirmed of Jehovah. Some specimens of these follow:

Isa. 6: 5—10. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar. And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I: Here am I, send me. And he said: Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

John 12: 37—41. But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him; that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake: Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again: He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his [Christ's] glory and spake of him.

Mal. 3: 1. Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

Mark 1: 2. As it is written in the prophets: Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

Ps. 78: 56. Yet they tempted and provoked the *most high God*, and kept not his testimonies.

1 Cor. 10: 9. Neither let us tempt *Christ*, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

It were easy greatly to increase the number of such passages as these; but I shall desist. Instead of that want of evidence, in the New Testament, with respect to the divinity of Christ, of which you repeatedly speak, and in strong terms, I find evidence almost everywhere to illustrate or to confirm the doctrine in question.

In fact it is often developed, to the practised eye, where a superficial reader would not even suspect it. For ex-

ample; in Rev. 2: 17, a promise is made to him that overcometh, that he shall eat of the hidden manna, and wear a diadem like that of the high-priest, on the front of which is a precious stone, and in this "a new name is written, which no man knoweth, save him that receiveth it." This is intelligible only by a reference to the Jewish customs and the high-priest's mitre. The proper name of God, viz. JEHOVAH, was never pronounced by the Jews, at least in later times; and in the Hebrew Bible it has no vowel points appropriate to guide the pronunciation, but is always read as אֲדֹנָי or אֱלֹהִים, and so translated *Lord* or *God*. Josephus says, that it was not allowed to the Jews to pronounce the name *Jehovah*. Still, this name was inscribed on a metallic plate, fixed upon the front of the high-priest's mitre. That priest was the only one entrusted with the secret of pronouncing it; which he is understood to have done (by himself), when blessing the people. This explains the phrase, "which no man knoweth, save he that receiveth it." A *new name* is to be added to this, on the mitre of "him that overcometh." What new name is there, then, that can be associated with the dread name of *Jehovah*? I know of but one; and this Paul has developed, when he says that to Christ is given "a name that is above every name . . . a name at which every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth," Phil. 2: 9, 10. The name of Jesus, then, is to be associated with the awful, the peculiar, the incommunicable name of Jehovah, on the crown of glory which the faithful follower of Jesus will wear, in the world of light and love.

That I have rightly referred this *new name* to Jesus, seems to be clear from his own words in Rev. 3: 12, "I will write upon him *my* new name." And again in Rev. 19: 12, 13, Christ is represented as having on his many crowns, "a name written, which no man knew but himself," i. e. a sacred, unpronounceable name; which in the sequel is said to be THE WORD OF GOD.

But where shall I end, if I go on pointing out similar cases

of accidental evidence in favour of the great doctrine in question? An attentive and intelligent reader cannot fail to discern them in very many portions of the New Testament; and to find them, moreover, so conditioned, that the writer appears evidently to build on the doctrine in question, as one that is acknowledged and felt to be true. This I regard as evidence of the strongest kind.

In giving the preceding brief summary of scriptural evidence respecting the divinity of Christ, you will perceive that I have omitted a considerable number of texts, which are oftentimes adduced to establish the point in question. I have done this for several reasons. First, those texts, the genuine reading of which is fairly questionable, I could not with propriety adduce; e. g. 1 John 5: 7 and some others. Secondly, a passage doubtful as to its genuineness, can add nothing to the weight of authority, when the strength of evidence is sifted and pondered. Thirdly, I regard an eagerness to seize on everything of this nature, and to press it into our service, as indicative of a feeling on our part, that our cause is somewhat wanting in adequate support, and therefore must be propped up by all sorts of shores, sound and unsound. Some Trinitarians, I concede, (and it is to my great regret), have not unfrequently shown such an eagerness. But they are not alone in it. Unitarians, for the most part, put attacks upon the genuineness of certain texts, in the very van of their invading army. It is a mistaken policy. The text in 1 John 5: 7 is beyond all question indefensible. But all the other cases of this nature which are of any importance, e. g. 1 Tim. 3: 16, and several others, are so plainly and decidedly against them on *diplomatic* grounds, that I am astonished to see such attacks continually repeated. They can surely make no real advances in this way. The unskilled public may indeed, for a while, be misled. But sooner or later the truth will come out. Besides, if we should concede to them every text against the genuineness of which they contend on the ground of defective diplomatic certainty, it would do their cause no service. These are so few, and the texts which are full and

direct and above all exception are so many and so strong, that the main question must lie just where it did before these specialities in the controversy began. For my part, although it were easy to double the passages that might be employed in defending the *Godhead* of Christ, when compared with those quoted above, I have no ambition or desire to do this. As I have already said, it is not on the *number*, but on the *quality* and *character* of the witnesses that I would lay stress. My feeling is, that the testimony proffered in behalf of the cause which I advocate, is veracious and unimpeachable.

Notwithstanding these considerations, however, I feel bound, before I quit the production of testimony, to appeal to one or two texts more, which have an indirect bearing on the Godhead of Christ, and a direct one, as it seems to me, on the *doctrine of the Trinity*. I do this principally, because we are constantly challenged to 'produce from the New Testament, anything which looks like the doctrine of a *Trinity*.'

At the moment when Jesus was about to leave the world and ascend to the Father, he addressed his disciples and said: "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth; Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," Matt. 28: 18, 19.

On this passage I remark, first, that there is every appearance of *equality* here, so far as it respects the relation of the baptized person to each of these. Secondly, the first two of these will surely be admitted to be *persons*: the third must therefore be something different from a mere *influence* or *energy*, or else the language is very strange, and greatly exposed to misapprehension. Thirdly, the ancient Israelites were "all baptized into Moses" (1 Cor. 10: 2), i. e. they acknowledged Moses as their lawfully constituted head and lawgiver, and that they were his followers and disciples. So in the new and better dispensation, where a mere human head or lawgiver gives place to one of higher rank, the disciples of Christ were to be "baptized into Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;" by which they came of course to acknowledge

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as their head, lawgiver, father, redeemer, and sanctifier. This looks to me, as if the Saviour meant to place this truth at the very head of all Christian profession and acknowledgment. Here is TRINITY; not the name, indeed, but the thing. If Christ is a mere *man*, and the Holy Spirit a mere *influence*, how can they thus be placed side by side (so to speak) with the eternal Father, and in the same relation to all Christians as he himself? This is a matter that cannot be explained on any Unitarian ground. The natural force and meaning of such language is lost, or obscured, by any exegesis of it which they can give. And when we give a *forced* meaning to a passage, the mind never rests satisfied with it, unless it is filled with party spirit, or obscured by ignorance.

A second passage, kindred to this, is in 2 Cor. 13: 14. It runs thus: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all."

Here is at least a prayer or supplication, on the part of Paul. To whom is it directed? To the Father, (for so God is here to be understood), Son, and Holy Ghost. This is the most natural construction. Still, I acknowledge the possibility of a different interpretation, viz. one which regards Paul as expressing the wish, that all the blessings which God and Christ and the Holy Spirit bestow, be they what they may, may rest upon the Corinthians. Viewed simply in this light, the passage might not be decisive as to the divine nature of each. Thus John wishes grace and peace to the seven churches of Asia from "Him who was and is and is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne," Rev. 1: 4. Paul says: "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels," 1 Tim. 5: 21. The Saviour himself speaks of confessing his faithful followers "before the angels of God," Luke 12: 8. In all these cases, the *presence-angels* of God, (so to speak), i. e. angels of the highest order, in immediate waiting before his throne, are doubtless meant. Yet in neither case is a supplication addressed to them. They are recog-

nized in the Apocalypse as the instruments of dispensing blessings, and in the other cases as in immediate attendance before the throne of heavenly majesty. It is possible, therefore, to view the text, in 2 Cor. 13: 14, in some such light; and in such a case, it would not follow with certainty that the benediction there uttered necessarily implies a Trinity in the Godhead. But when we take into full view the formula of Christian baptism, it seems to my mind more probable, that Paul has spoken in conformity with this.

At all events, if the *form* of doxology employed in church services, is not to be found in the New Testament, the substance of the thing is there. The doxologies to Christ, scattered through the epistles and the Apocalypse, are inexplicable on the ground of Unitarianism. "To him be glory and dominion forever and ever," 2 Pet. 3: 18. "Christ, over all, God blessed forever. Amen." Rom. 9: 5. These are specimens. And if Christ is merely a created being, and still more if he is a mere man, these doxologies are some of the strangest of all things which Christianity has disclosed, or which it requires us to believe and practise. How can we believe that so enlightened a Jew as Paul could employ them, unless he believed that Christ is *divine*?

Thus have I endeavoured to show, that the New Testament bestows upon Christ the appellation of God, accompanied by such adjuncts as naturally, (not to say necessarily), lead us to understand this word in its highest sense; that it attributes to him equality with God; that it represents him as the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the universe; declares his omniscience, his omnipotence, and his eternity; and both by precepts and examples, exhibits Christ as the object of prayer and divine worship, by the church in heaven and on earth. To these conclusions, do the plain rules of exegesis necessarily conduct me. I am sensible that allegations are frequently made, that we receive our systems of belief from the Creeds and Confessions of faith, which have descended from former unenlightened, and superstitious or philosophizing ages. That some of our technical *phraseolo-*

gy has been derived from men, who *sometimes* speculated too boldly, and substituted names for ideas, I am ready to concede. I feel the embarrassments, which, on account of this, are occasionally thrown in the way of inculcating truth at the present time. Men are very apt to suppose, that if you throw away the old *terms* or *names*, you reject the old ideas also. Yet it can be only superficial thinkers who will soberly believe this. It is in general, therefore, a sufficient reason with me for dismissing phraseology, when it must, almost of necessity, be misunderstood by the great body of men. Yet a sudden and entire revolution in theology in this respect, would be undesirable; because such a revolution must again lead, at first, to other misapprehensions. I am willing, therefore, to retain many terms which have become venerable for their antiquity, which I should reject without hesitation, if they were now presented *de novo*.

I am not conscious of being led to the adoption of Trinitarian views, or to the ascription of true and proper divinity to Christ, by any creed or any human authority on earth. Unless I am quite ignorant of myself, the only influence which creeds and confessions exercise over me, is to modify my *phraseology*. I take the language of theology as I find it; and do not venture upon the composition of a new nomenclature.

And now, in concluding this Letter, permit me to say, that as reason does not, and cannot, decide against the doctrine of the Trinity, as explained in my second Letter; nor against the union of the divine and human natures in Christ; the question whether these are truths or not, rests solely on the decision of *revelation*. What then is that decision? This question I have endeavoured to answer.

My immediate inducement for undertaking the above examination of the Scripture doctrine of the Trinity, was the challenge which you make (p. 9) in the following words: "We challenge our opponents to adduce *one* passage in the New Testament, where the word *God* . . . unless turned from its usual sense by the connection, does not mean the Father." I have accepted this challenge, not I hope in the

spirit of contest, but with the desire of contributing, so far as lies in my power, to develope what the New Testament does teach, in relation to this matter. I have laboured to show, that the very reason why I believe Christ to be truly divine, is *because the connection, when he is called* GOD, *ascribes to him such attributes and works, as leaves me no room to doubt that the New Testament writers meant to assert his proper divinity.*

After stating your apprehensions in regard to the doctrine that Christ has two natures, the belief of which you affirm to be "an enormous tax on human credulity," you say: "I am aware that these remarks will be met by two or three texts, in which Christ is called *God;* and by a class of passages, not very numerous, in which divine properties are said to be ascribed to him," p. 14. Whether the number of texts in which Christ is called God, amounts to no more than *two* or *three*, it would be superfluous now to inquire, when they lie before us, and can easily be counted. We can also judge, whether the class of passages is "not very numerous, in which divine properties are said to be ascribed to him," with equal facility. It is too late, however, for you and me to rest our faith upon the *number* of passages that inculcate a doctrine. We have conceded the Bible to be of divine authority. The simple question is: What does any passage mean, according to the rules of interpretation admitted in all other cases? This being ascertained, only two courses are before us; the one to receive its meaning as the guide of our faith; the other to reject its authority, and deny our obligation to believe the decisions of the Scripture. If the New Testament does teach that Christ is not really divine, but a mere finite creature, and this can be made out by an unbiassed interpretation of it, I must either receive this doctrine, receive it implicitly, (for if I am not deceived in respect to myself, I only desire to know what God has taught in order to believe it), or else I must reject all claims to inspiration in the sacred writers, and follow their instructions only so far as they coincide with my own speculations. I am fully satisfied there is no

middle path here; and that a man who investigates for himself extensively and independently, must eventually follow one or the other of these courses.

Convince me then that you apply the principles of interpretation which you have laid down, in an unbiassed manner, and that the New Testament does according to them clearly teach that Jesus is not, and cannot be, divine, and you will make me a convert to the doctrines, (at least to some of them), which you embrace. Where the apostles lead me, I will go; or if not, then I will renounce all deference to them. While I have a being also, I will cherish a grateful remembrance of any man, who shall convince me by sound reasoning, that I am in an error on this great subject, and am wandering from the path of life.

But you will allow me to say, what you will doubtless affirm of yourself: 'I cannot be convinced, until I am satisfied that my principles of interpretation are wrong, and my application of them erroneous.' You have described (p. 14) in what manner you avoid the conclusion drawn from those texts which call Christ *God*, and which apparently ascribe divine attributes to him. On the principles of exegesis which you have there disclosed, I shall remark in another letter. I will at present say only, that they appear to me far from being well established.

I hope your candour will concede, that the positions which I have just laid down are correct, and are such as become every sincere lover of truth. I am quite ready to grant, that we ought not to expect to convince you and your friends, by using reproachful epithets or severe appellations. We cannot convince you by appealing to our New England fathers, or to their creeds; to the ancient fathers of the church, or to any body of men whatever. You may always say in reply to us: 'Are not men fallible? And have not the best of uninspired men cherished some errors? Give us the *reasons* why our fathers received the doctrines in question, and then we will hear you; the fact that they did receive them is merely a part of church history, but certainly no theological

argument. The papal hierarchy is supported by many of the ancient fathers; and perhaps there never has been a sect in Christendom, who did not feel that they might make an appeal to fathers, whom they at least respected.' To this reply I have nothing to object.

Nor can we convince you, by a tenacious and unreasonable opposition to all critical examination of the New Testament; or by throwing out hints in our sermons or writings, that critical studies belong only to those who have a wish to be heretical or skeptical; or by a forced and mystical explanation of various passages of Scripture, and converting them to the support of sentiments which they never were designed to support. The sound rules of interpretation will soon sweep away every vestige of such defective and extravagant opinions about the word of God; and orthodoxy must stand or fall, at last, by the simple decision of the Scriptures interpreted according to the general laws of language.

On the other hand; you will, I hope, as cheerfully concede that we cannot be convinced by calling us hard names; by misrepresenting our sentiments; by proving that Calvin helped to burn Servetus; by affirming that our sentiments come from creeds and confessions of human authority, fabricated by superstition and philosophy; by representing us as gloomy, superstitious, malignant, and unsocial; by appropriating to Unitarians all that is kind and noble and generous and exalted, and leaving to us only all that is opposite to these virtues; by affirming that we are desirous of infringing upon Christian liberty, and of establishing an Inquisition to defend our sentiments, and by exhorting others to resist such tyranny; or by representing us as admitting in words that God is kind and paternal, while we think meanly of him, and treat him as the heathen did their Jupiter. Such things may add fuel to the fire of controversy; but can the lover of truth and of the word of God be convinced by them? They are the arts indeed of controversialists—and arts like them, I am sorry to say, are not confined to any one party. Passion has more control over disputants than they are aware of. Zeal for

what they believe to be truth, is what they think inspires them; while perhaps their words, or the spirit of their representations, "breathe out threatenings," if not "slaughter," to their opponents. I hardly dare trust myself to write this paragraph, least I should catch the spirit while I am describing it. I know in some measure how frail I am; but I think I do sincerely disapprove of such a spirit, in whatever party it may be found.

In consulting writers of different views and sentiments, one is grieved to find how much of this spirit has been indulged. I have seen it even in many great and good men. Possessed of feelings naturally ardent, I am aware that there is reason to tremble for myself, lest I may, in some respect or other, transgress the laws of Christian propriety in these letters, and hinder in a measure the conviction, in the minds of some, which they might possibly produce.

In one thing we shall certainly be agreed. The sober inquirer after truth must be convinced by *reason* and *argument*. All else is nothing to him. And where these lead him, he will go. The path of truth is the path of duty. The approbation of God is worth infinitely more to a sincere and candid and honest and believing heart, than all the honour which party zeal can bestow, or the world is able to give.

POSTSCRIPT.

After finishing the above letter, your "Note for the second Edition" came to hand. But as it seemed to me, that most which it contained had already been anticipated, I did not think it of importance to change the shape of the preceding letter, and adapt it to your Note as well as to your Sermon. I was still less inclined to this, because I had endeavored, as far as possible, to avoid giving any personal shape to the controversy; knowing how bitter and irrelevant to the original subject all controversies soon become, when personalities are admitted. I have not the most distant design of saying anything, with a view to wound your personal sensibility; but I do feel, and I ought to

feel, a deep interest in addressing the understanding and reason of a man, who by his weight of character, sobriety of mind, and eminent talents, has acquired so much influence in society as you have. And in order to do this with propriety, I have endeavored as far as possible, to throw the whole subject into the shape of a discussion respecting principles; and to avoid that form of writing, which too commonly involves personal reflection.

Will you now permit me, in this informal way, to add a few things, which the perusal of your Note has suggested to me?

I am unable to reconcile the first passage of your Note, with another, in the body of your Sermon. In the former you say: "We are told, by Trinitarians, that Jesus Christ is the supreme God, the same Being as the Father, and that a leading end of Christianity is to reveal him in this character." In the latter you say: "According to this doctrine, [i. e. the doctrine of the Trinity], there are three infinite and equal persons, possessing supreme divinity, called the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Each of these persons, as described by theologians, has his own particular consciousness, will, and perceptions. They love each other, converse with each other, and delight in each other's society. They perform different parts in man's redemption, each having his appropriate office, and neither doing the work of the other. The Son is mediator, and not the Father. The Father sends the Son, and is not himself sent; nor is he conscious, like the Son, of taking flesh. Here then we have three intelligent agents, possessed of different consciousnesses, different wills, and different perceptions, performing different acts, and sustaining different relations; and if these things do not imply and constitute three minds or beings, we are utterly at a loss to know how three minds or beings are to be formed."

But how can Trinitarians maintain that Jesus Christ is the "*same Being as the Father*," when a prominent trait of their doctrine is, that there is a *distinction* between him and the Father? You yourself represent them as even holding this distinction to be equal to that which exists between two different men. This indeed is incorrect; but it is equally so, to represent them as holding that Jesus Christ is the "*same Being as the Father*," if you mean by this *the same in all respects*.

Nor can I see the propriety of the remark in your Note, that if Christ were "the same being as the Father . . . we should expect to hear him continually spoken of as the Supreme God." For first, are we to receive the book of God as it is, or are we

at liberty to insist that it must be conformed to our *expectations*? And secondly, if Christ was truly man, (a point as certain as that Christ ever existed), and was conversant in the *human nature* with men, how, in a book which gives us the history of what he said and did during his *incarnation*, should we expect to hear him *continually* spoken of as the *supreme God*? The reasonableness of such an expectation seems to be, at least, very questionable.

In truth the sacred writers do not appear to me to write as controversialists, on the subject of Christ's divinity. It is the way with men, who have extravagant views of the importance of any particular subject, to be ever dwelling upon it, and taking occasion to introduce it as often as possible. Thus I have heard some preachers, who will not utter a single public discourse, or offer a single prayer, without letting it be known of all men, that they are *champions* for the doctrine of the Trinity. I have heard others, who never fail to let their hearers know that they are emancipated from the thraldom of the dark ages; that they have thrown off the shackles of creeds and confessions, and forms imposed by ignorant and bigoted men; that they are enlightened and *reasonable* Christians; and that their audience are bound in duty to become their imitators. The holy apostles however possessed, as I must believe, none of the spirit which prompts to either of these courses. They did not view subjects in a distorted and sectarian light. The edifice of truth —the temple of the living God—rose under their hands not only into a lofty and magnificent structure, but into one which was as conspicuous for its *symmetry* as for its grandeur.

All parts of Christian doctrine held their proper place in the system which they taught. Why should they then be *continually* speaking of Christ as *supreme God*, when (as I verily believe) they expected no professed follower of Christ to call this doctrine in question. John seems to have had opponents to it in his eye, when he wrote the first verse of his gospel; but excepting this, I do not remember another passage of the New Testament which has the aspect of opposition to gainsayers, in regard to the divinity of Christ. The apostles doubtless expected to be believed, when they had *once* plainly asserted anything. That they are not, is indeed to be lamented; but it cannot be charged to their fault. They felt (what we feel now) that very frequent, strong, and direct asseverations of anything are apt to produce a suspicion in the minds of a hearer or reader, that the person making them has not arguments on which he relies, and so sub-

stitutes confident affirmations in their room; or that he is himself but imperfectly satisfied with the cause which he defends; or that he has sinister motives in view. For myself, I confess I am inclined to suspect a man of all these, who makes very frequent and confident asseverations.

I am the more satisfied, then, that the New Test. treats the subject in question as one which was not controverted, and as one which was not expected to be called in question. My conclusion from the apostles' mode of treating it is, I acknowledge, quite different from that which you draw, as stated in your Sermon and Notes. But with my present views, I must think it to be more probable than yours.

In regard to what follows in your Note, most of it has been anticipated. I will touch upon only a few points.

With respect to the passages which we adduce in proof of Christ's divine nature, you observe that the "strength of the Trinitarian argument lies in those, in which Jesus is called God." This may be true; but it lies in them, as I have from the first endeavoured to show, not simply because the name *God* is given to him, but because those things are ascribed to him as God which no being but the supreme God can perform. *My whole argument is constructed on this ground;* while your whole Note stands on the ground, that we draw our conclusion simply from the fact that the appellation of *God* is given to Christ.

What you say respecting the argument in favour of Christ's divine nature, from the *name* given him in Matt. 1: 23, accords in the main with my own views. To maintain, as some have done, that the name *Immanuel* proves the doctrine in question, is a fallacious argument. Is not Jerusalem called *Jehovah our righteousness.* And is Jerusalem *divine*, because such a name is given to it?

Why should you say in the third paragraph of your Note, that in looking through "Matthew, Mark, and Luke, you meet with no instance in which Christ is called God?" Are there no proofs here of his omniscience, of his omnipotence, of his authority to forgive sin, of his supreme and legislative right? And are not these things better proof of his divine nature than a mere name can be? Why moreover should such an invidious distinction be applied, to the prejudice of John's writings, and of the Epistles? Do you not admit all the New Testament to be of divine origin and authority? Of what importance then is it, whether the doctrine of Christ's divinity is found in one part or another? Besides, if any disciple could know who the Lord

in reality was, has any one a better claim to be considered as knowing it than John, the disciple "who leaned on Jesus' bosom?"

You have passed the whole of John I: 1, with merely commenting on the *name* Θεός. My dear Sir, can you expect to satisfy candid inquirers with this? Are you not bound to tell us how this *Logos* (Word) could *create the worlds* (τὰ πάντα, the universe), before this text is disposed of? You must tell us how *creative* power, the highest, the distinguishing act of Deity, which constitutes the characteristic and prominent feature of the true God in distinction from all false gods, (Is. 40: 40 and onward), can be *delegated?* When you can explain this, then you will bring us upon ground, where we shall be unable to controvert the Gnostics, who denied that the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the supreme God. *Inferior* power, they maintained, was competent to create the world. What less do they, who ascribe *creation* to Christ and yet reject his divinity?

Why should you pass over all that on which we rely for proof, and touch only that on which we do not profess to place confident reliance? I mean, why should you descant on the *name* God, and say nothing of the attributes ascribed to him who bears this name? If we should argue in the same manner with you, ought we to expect to convince you? Much less could we fairly acquit our consciences of an obligation to represent fairly the gospel of Christ to the world, should we publish to them a solemn appeal, in which we should endeavor to make them believe, that *all* the arguments in favor of a particular doctrine held by many Christians, *consisted in that very thing on which they did not rely;* or at most, in that which constituted merely but a part of their grounds of belief.

The simile from Plato and Socrates, I must think, is less happily chosen, than your fine taste and cultivated mind commonly lead you to choose. In the same breath that you say "Plato was in the beginning with Socrates, and was Socrates," you add, "that whoever saw and heard Plato, saw and heard, not Plato, but Socrates, and that as long as Plato lived, Socrates lived and taught." That is, your first sentence would either be not at all understood, or understood of course in a sense totally different from that which you meant to convey, unless you added a commentary along with the sentence. John has indeed added a commentary; but this is, *that he means to call Christ* THE GOD *who created the Universe.* Of this commentary you have taken no notice. But of this you are bound to take

notice, if you mean to convince those who differ from you, or to deal uprightly with those whom you design to instruct.

On the texts John 20: 28. Acts 20: 28. Rom. 9: 5. 1 Tim. 3: 16. Heb. 1: 6. and John 5: 20, I have already said what I wish to say, at present. The remarks in your Notes do not seem to call for any new investigation.

You say, (near the close of your Note), that you have "collected all the passages in the New Testament in which Jesus is *supposed* to be called God." The foregoing letter, however, does represent us as *supposing* that there are *still more,* in which he is called *God;* although I have omitted not a few, in which many Trinitarians have *supposed* that Christ is called God. Why you should affirm this, when nearly every book on the doctrine of the Trinity that ever has been published by Trinitarians, will contradict it, I am unable to explain.

You repeat also the assertion here, "that in two or three passages the title [of God] may be given him, [Christ]; but in every case, it is given in connections and under circumstances, which imply that it is not to be received in its highest and most literal sense."

But in no single instance have you noticed the "connections and circumstances," in which the appellation *God* is bestowed on Christ. Can you reasonably expect your thinking readers will take this assertion upon credit? Are you not sacredly obligated to prove to these same readers, *by the Scriptures interpreted according to the universal laws of explaining human language*, that the New Testament writers have *not* ascribed to Christ CREATIVE *power*, *omniscience*, *omnipotence*, *omnipresence*, *divine worship*, *divine honours*, and *eternal existence?* What are *names* in this dispute? Show that these *attributes* are *not* ascribed to Christ, and you make us Unitarians at once. Do not take the advantage of representing our arguments as consisting in that on which we do not place reliance, and then say to your readers: 'This is all which Trinitarians have to allege in their own favour.' Dispute can never be terminated in this way. Meet fairly and openly the points in debate. Many of your readers are too intelligent to be satisfied with any other course. Any other does not become your high character and distinguished talents.

LETTER IV.

Reverend and Dear Sir,

In my last Letter, I endeavoured to offer reasons why I believe that Christ is *truly divine*. You will very naturally expect me to take some notice of those texts, on which you would specially rely, to prove his inferiority to the Father. This I must do; but in as summary a manner as possible. Not because it would not be easy to say much, even more easy than to write briefly, and yet with perspicuity; but because there would be danger of protracting the subject, and tiring the patience of readers.

Let me begin, then, by stating certain things which are intimately connected with the subject in question. While I believe that Christ is *truly divine*, I believe that he is as *truly human*, i. e. that he was a real man, and lived, acted, suffered, and died as a man. He resembled, however, man in his primitive state, i. e. Adam as he came out of the hands of his Maker. He was pure and sinless. But he possessed all the feelings and all the innocent infirmities of human nature. I know no proposition that can possibly be proved from the New Testament, if this cannot; nor do I know of a more absurd heresy than that of the Docetæ, who averred that Christ was a man in appearance merely, and not in reality.

I had actually added to this last sentence, the following one: "In this, I know, you perfectly accord with me;" but hesitating for a moment whether it was correct, I instituted a a reëxamination of your Sermon, in order to see if this were the case. I can scarcely express my surprise, when, after a diligent search, I was not able to find an intimation that Christ was truly and properly a man. All that you maintain is, that he was a being distinct from the Father, and inferior to him. I must retract therefore my sentence against the

Docetæ, lest I should seem to have treated your opinion with severity. But the state of my mind in regard to the weight of evidence, I cannot retract. If the evidence be not overwhelming, that Christ was perfectly man, I cannot conceive it possible, that any point in theology or morals is capable of being established.

The Gnostics maintained, that from the supreme Divinity proceeded certain Eons, who were a kind of *lesser gods;* and one of whom (Christ) created the world. This Eon descended upon Jesus at his baptism, and forsook him at his crucifixion. In what important respect he differs from this, who holds to a superangelic soul in Christ, and a human body, (as it must be presumed you do), I confess I cannot see. The Socinian theory seems to me incomparably more rational, and more tenable, in respect to this matter, than any shade of the Arian hypothesis. If the evidence be not complete, that Christ was really a man from his birth, actions, sufferings, death, and affirmations respecting himself, then how is it to be proved that Christ ever existed at all? And will you refuse to assent to the proposition, that Christ participated in the divine nature, because you cannot see *how* such a union of different natures could take place, and yet believe that *a human body was united to a soul not human?* To what order or class of beings, then, does this new *compound* and strangely mixed person belong? He is not divine; he is not human, for a human soul is surely essential to human nature; nor is he angelic, for angels have no corporeal forms. Are we to be freed from *mystery*, then, by such a view of Christ's person? It does seem to me, if there be *mystery* in any theory which has ever been proposed respecting the person of Christ, it is surely to be found here. I will not say, (as you do about the *twofold* nature of Christ in which we believe), that "it is an enormous tax upon human credulity;" but I must say, that it appears to me more like such a tax, than any other theory with which the church has hitherto been agitated. I can never bring myself to view it as probable, in the remotest degree, unless I find it in the

Scripture. But there I find that the Logos, who existed before the world was made, was *God; even that God who created the universe.* I cannot then admit him to be a superangelic being simply, until I am convinced, either that John was mistaken, or that his language has a different meaning from that which it plainly appears to have.

As to the theory which maintains that Christ was God's *own proper* Son, before the creation of the world, (and of course before his incarnation), and God's own Son in the same sense in which Solomon was the son of David, it is natural to ask, first: Who then was his *mother?* And secondly: How much do the Divinities of the Christian system, viewed in such a light as this, differ from Jupiter and his progeny among the Greeks and Romans?

After all, I cannot but hope that I have not understood you correctly, and that I have not sufficient grounds to believe that you embrace any species of Arianism, or deny the proper humanity of Christ. For if *this* humanity be not a matter of fact, I cannot help believing, that we must forever abandon the hope of acquiring any definite ideas of what the writers of the New Testament meant to teach, in any case whatever.

To return to my purpose. The proper humanity of Christ being considered as an established fact, I have one general observation to make on the principles of exegesis which are connected with it.

It is this, viz., that inasmuch as Christ has truly a human nature, everything said of him in respect to this nature, must necessarily be spoken of him in a capacity in which he is inferior to the Father. In a word, as his human nature is inferior to the divine, so whatever has relation to it, or is predicted of it, must of course be that which implies inferiority to the divine.

We do then, (if you will allow me to use your own expressive words, though applied by you in a manner somewhat different), "we do maintain, that the human properties and circumstances of Christ, his birth, sufferings and death

—his praying to God, his ascribing to God all his power and offices; the acknowledged properties of Christ, we say, oblige us to interpret" them of *human nature;* and to draw the conclusion that whatever could be predicated of a real man, pious and sinless, might be predicated of him. How would he—how *could* he—have assumed our nature, (except as the Docetæ affirmed that he did, viz. in *appearance* only), unless everything could be predicated of him which properly belongs to man? Accordingly, we know that "he increased in wisdom, stature, and favour with God and man;" that he ate, drank, slept, laboured; was fatigued, hungry, thirsty; rejoiced and sympathized with his brethren, wept, was in an agony—prayed, bled, died, was buried, and rose again. If these things do not forever exclude all hope of making any shade of the Arian theory probable, I must confess that I am an entire stranger to the nature of evidence, and to what the New Testament contains.

Do you ask me, how you shall distinguish, when a text speaks of Christ in respect to his human nature, or in respect to his divine nature? I answer: Just as when you speak of a man, you distinguish whether what is said relates to his body or his soul. When I say: 'Abraham is dead,' I mean obviously his *mortal* part. When I say: 'Abraham is alive,' I mean obviously his *immortal* part. When the evangelist says that Jesus increased in stature, and wisdom, and in favour with God and man; and when he affirms of him other things predicable of our human nature, he obviously means to apply all this to his human nature. When he affirms that the Logos is *God*, and that he made the universe; when the apostle says, that he is God over all and blessed forever; I cannot help thinking it to be equally obvious, that they predicate this of his *divine* nature. The simple answer to your question then is, that we must determine which nature is meant, by what is affirmed concerning it. *The subject is known by its predicates*, i. e. *ex praedicatis cernitur subjectum.*

To the remarks just made on the proper humanity of

Christ, and to the principles of exegesis which result from it, let me add,

Secondly, that the appellation *Father*, is not always used to designate that distinction in the Godhead which we commonly describe by calling it *the first person*. It is sometimes a general title of the divine nature. (See Deut. 32: 6. Isaiah 63: 16. 64: 8. Matt. 5: 16, 48. 6: 4. 7: 11. John 8: 41). In the same manner *Κύριος* (Lord) is often applied to Christ in particular; and sometimes to God as a general appellation. The divinity is called *Father*, on account of that peculiar and provident care which he extends to all the creatures of his power. He is called *Lord* (*Κύριος*), because of his universal dominion.

Proper attention to this obvious principle will explain several passages, which have been thought to relate merely to what is denominated the *first person* in the Trinity, and to ascribe properties to him in an exclusive manner.

Thirdly, there is another observation, which I cannot refrain from making here, and which seems to me of great importance, in regard to our mode of thinking and reasoning on the subject of the distinction in the Godhead. This is, that no terms which are applied by the Scriptures to designate this distinction, or to predicate anything of it, can be supposed *fully* and *definitely* to express what exists in the Godhead, or what is done by it. The obvious reason of this is, that the language of men, (being all formed from perceptions of finite objects, by beings who are of yesterday, and whose circle of vision is extremely limited), cannot possibly be adequate to express *fully* and *definitely* what pertains to the self-existent and infinite God. How often do men forget this, in their reasonings about the Deity! In some things, nearly all men agree in observing caution, with regard to language which is applied to God. When the Scripture speaks of his having eyes, ears, hands, feet, etc., all men, who do not rave with Immanuel Swedenborg, understand these terms as being figurative. They do so for the obvious reason, that God is a spirit, and that things of this nature can be literally pre-

dicated only of human beings that have flesh and blood. We mean to say: God *sees;* God *hears;* God *acts;* God *moves;* when we attribute to him those members, which we employ in performing such acts. And still, this language is, from the nature of the case, only an *approximation* to a full and complete description. What corresponds in the infinite, omniscient, omnipresent Spirit, to our *seeing*, and *hearing*, and *acting*, and *moving*, must necessarily be different, in many important respects, from all these things in us.

When we say: God is in heaven; the Lord looked down, or came down, from heaven; Jehovah sits upon a throne high and lifted up; or when we predicate anything of him which corresponds to the exaltation and magnificence of earthly monarchs; we understand, of course, that this language is not to be taken literally, and as adequate to a complete description, but only as the language of approximation. When we say: God is angry; God hates; God scorns; the Lord will deride, will laugh, will frown, will abhor, and the like; do we predicate all these things of God in a *literal* manner, or do we understand them all as conveying to us an idea of something in the divine affections, actions, or mode of treating us, which corresponds to something that men do or feel? The answer is very obvious; and in all this matter we apprehend or feel little or no difficulty. At least, none but enthusiastic visionaries, who would fain make heaven like earth, and God like themselves; or ignorant men, whose thoughts are so chained down to the objects of sense, as to be incapable of elevation above them; are embarrassed by such subjects, or substantially misapprehend them.

Are we not now prepared to advance one step further? May we not say, when the Scripture speaks of the Logos as becoming flesh and dwelling among us; of his dwelling in the bosom of the Father; of his coming from God and being sent of him; of his humbling himself and taking upon himself the condition of a servant, and other things of the like nature; that we are not to suppose this language is adequate

to describe *fully* and *definitely* the incarnation of the Son of God, or his distinction from, or connection with the Father? It is all merely the *language of approximation* toward a complete description. It is merely this of course, and necessarily nothing more, as it regards description of the *manner* of these things. Language, from its very nature, must be inadequate to such description. It was not formed with such facts in view; and finite beings, moreover, may well be supposed incapable of forming it so as to be adequate to the full and definite description of all that pertains to the divinity. It may nevertheless express enough to excite our highest interest, and to command our best obedience. And this undoubtedly is done, in the case which has just been mentioned.

The principle of exegesis here exhibited, had it been early acknowledged, and generally practised upon, would have saved the world a great deal of dispute, and two parties of men much trouble. The one of these are men, who, while admitting the inadequacy of language in other respects fully and definitely to describe the divinity, have taken it for granted here, that no such inadequateness was to be found, and have sought to define, and distinguish, until they have overwhelmed themselves and their readers with subtilties too tenuous for comprehension. The other, hostile to the doctrine of a distinction in the Godhead, have forced upon the expressions in question a sense that was far-fetched, and which violence only could make them to speak. It seems to me, that the path of sound reason and common sense is the medium between these two extremes. I would not do violence to the expressions in question; nor would I understand them as *fully* and *definitely* describing what does exist in God, or is done by him. I believe they are, as I have said, the language of approximation; that they signify something which is in God, or something that has been done by him, that corresponds to those things among men which would be described by language of the like nature; and something too of the highest interest and of the deepest moment to the welfare of the human race. And though it might gratify my curiosity, and perhaps my pride,

to know something more of the divine constitution or mode of existing and acting, yet I can have no assurance, no good reason to believe, that it would contribute at present to facilitate my duties, or to increase my happiness. I certainly have no good reason to suppose, that in my present state, I am capable of understanding such subjects beyond what is already revealed respecting them.

With the observations before us that have now been made, I will next proceed to make some remarks on such New Test. representations of Christ, as have been supposed to present serious difficulties in regard to the views of Trinitarians.

Christ, in his mediatorial capacity, I take to be a complex person, who may be spoken of as either human or divine; in like manner as we may say of ourselves, we are *mortal* or we are *immortal*. As Mediator, then, one may truly say that by his obedience he merited and obtained a high reward; i. e. this is predicated of that nature, which was capable of obeying and of being rewarded. So God is said to have "highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name." (Phil. 2: 9—11). In a similar way, all power is *given* him in heaven, and in earth, i. e. he is constituted "head over all things to his church." (Matt. 28: 18). Acting as such a head, "all enemies are put under his feet." (1 Cor. 15: 25—27). And this *mediatorial* dominion, when the work of a mediator is completed, will be resigned at the final judgment, 1 Cor. 15: 28.

Of the same tenor are many passages. When God is said to be the *head* of Christ (1 Cor. 11: 3), I understand it of that nature in Christ of which this can be predicated. When Christ is called the *image* of the invisible God, the *brightness* of the Father's glory and the express image (χαρακτήρ) of his person, i. e. of him; or the only begotten of the Father, the Son of God; God's own Son; God's beloved Son; his dear Son, etc.; I understand all this phraseology as descriptive of his mediatorial nature and station. I know indeed, that many of these texts have been appropriated by some Trinitarians, to prove the divine nature of Christ; in my ap-

prehension, however, this has been done injudiciously, and without any solid reason. Texts of this class may be found. Matt. 17: 5. John 1: 14. 10: 36. 14: 10. 3: 35. Col. 1: 13. Heb. 1: 5. Rom. 8: 29, 32.

In Heb. 5: 7—10, is a passage which has occasioned much speculation. "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared, though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; called of God, an high priest after the order of Melchisedec."

If Christ were really *human*, what is more perfectly consonant with reason and piety, than that he should act in the manner here described; or than that he should be exalted to glory as the reward of these actions, and be constituted the Saviour of his people?

It is certainly more difficult to satisfy the mind in regard to John 14: 28: "My Father is greater (*μείζων*) than I." From the context of this passage it appears not to have been the object of Jesus, on this occasion, to compare his own *nature* with that of the Father, but his *condition*. "If ye loved me," said he to his weeping disciples, "ye would rejoice that I said, I go unto the Father; for the Father is greater than I;" i. e. ye would rejoice that I am to leave this state of suffering and humiliation, and resume that "glory which I had with the Father, before the world was." You ought to rejoice at my exaltation to the bliss and glory of the Father. In Hebrew, גָּדוֹל (*great*) is used to indicate a state of prosperity, a happy state, Gen. 26: 13.

It is obvious here, that these two texts (both uttered on the same occasion), cannot be consistently explained, without the supposition of two natures; the one, which is in a suffering and depressed state, and the other that which was in a state of glory with the Father before the world was, i. e. from eternity. I cannot accede to the opinion of those interpreters,

who suppose that the glory spoken of is only that which the Father had *decreed* from eternity that Christ should have, in consequence of the promulgation of the gospel by him; for the glory spoken of is not one that results from what is *to be* done, it is a glory *which Christ had with the Father* (*πρὸς τὸν πάτερα*) *before the world was.* On this passage the commentary of Kuinoel may be consulted, who has defended this exposition, as it seems to me, in a manner entirely unanswerable.

After all, it can be only in consequence of the peculiar union of the Logos with Jesus, that his return to the Father (so far as the *Logos* can be said to return) is here spoken of; and only in reference to his humiliation (*ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε, ἑαυτὸν ἐταπείνωσε*), that his return to glory can be prayed for. A thousand questions can easily be raised, and as many difficulties suggested; but they all spring from interpreting the language literally, and not in such a way as the nature of the case requires.

Mark 13: 32 offers serious difficulties. "Of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." The *day* and *hour* are, according to some, the day of judgment; but, as I apprehend (from comparing the context), the day of vengeance upon the Jews is meant. To solve the difficulty presented, some have objected to the reading *οὐδὲ ὁ υἱός* (neither the Son); but for this objection there are no adequate authorities. Others, with Hilary (de Trinitate 9.) say, that *not to know* means *not to publish* or *declare;* Ea nescit, quæ aut in tempore non sunt confitenda, aut non agnoscuntur ad meritum." There is no doubt that the verb *γινώσκω* may sometimes have the sense of *making known;* but a derivative of the verb *εἴδω* is used here, which does not bear such a sense, nor will the tenor of the verse admit it. To say: "That day and hour no man *maketh known*, neither the angels, nor the Son, but the Father," would be the same as saying that the Father *does make it known.* But where has he revealed it? After all, what more real difficulty presents itself in this case, than in

that where Jesus is said to have *increased in wisdom?* Luke 2: 52. If he did possess a nature really human, that nature was capable, of course, of progressive improvement and knowledge. As it appears to me, there is no proper method of solving the difficulty, as the text stands, but by appropriating the expression, as in other like cases, to that nature of which the assertion made can be predicated.

John 17: 3, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." The *true God* here seems to me plainly not to be opposed to, or contrasted with, *Christ*, but, as everywhere else in case this expression is used, opposed to *idols*. In the verse preceding, Christ says: "Thou hast given me the power over all *flesh*, that thou mightest bestow eternal life upon all whom thou hast given me," i. e. both Gentiles and Jews. He proceeds: This is eternal life, that they might know thee the only true God, i. e. *the only God and true God*, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Now what is there here, different from that which we preach and inculcate every Sabbath? Do we not teach that there is one only living and true God? And that he sent his Son to die for sinners? And do we not insist, that eternal life is connected with the reception of these truths? I really see no more difficulty here, than in the text: "God so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Besides, it is Christ himself, who is addressing the Father, that utters the words in question. Could he otherwise express the sentiment, that the same Father is the only true God, in distinction from all false or pretended gods? That he should join with this his own name, inasmuch as he was the only mediator and Saviour, was necessary in order to the full expression of the great *gospel truth* which he uttered.

1 Cor. 8: 4—6, "As concerning, therefore, the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none

other god but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many), yet to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." I have cited several verses, for the sake of introducing the context. From this it is plain, that the one God, the Father, is not here placed in opposition to Christ, but to the *lords many and gods many* of the heathen. If you insist that the *one God* is in opposition to *Christ*, or excludes him, then, as Christ is the *one Lord* (εἷς κύριος), you must insist that he is so named in opposition to the *Lordship* (κυριότης) of the Father, and of course that this denies the *Lordship* of creation in respect to the same Father. It is plain, however, at least according to my apprehension, that *God* and *Lord* here are mere synonymes. (See v. 5, where λεγόμενοι Θεοι is explained by Θεοὶ πολλοί and κύριοι πολλοί). Nothing is plainer than that κύριος is a common title of God, both in the Old Testament and the New.

Moreover, that which is predicated of the *one God* and *one Lord* here is the same, viz. that they are the author and preserver of all things. The use of the preposition διά, in cases of this nature, has already been the subject of remark.

The nature of the whole case shows, that the apostle places the *object* of the Christian's worship, in opposition or in contrast with, the heathen or idol gods. What then is that object? The one God the Father, and the one Lord Jesus Christ, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things. The passage evidently holds out Christ to be the object of the Christian's worship, in the same manner as the Father is. And as the apostle seems to me simply to assert the *unity* of God in opposition to idols, I am not able to perceive how the divinity of the Saviour is impeached by it, any more than the *lordship* of the Father is impeached by making Christ the *one Lord*. To embrace my view of the whole passage in a brief paraphrase: 'Idols are nothing; there is but one God. There

are indeed among the heathen such as are *called gods* (λεγόμενοι Θεοί), who comprise *gods* and *lords* many; yet Christians have only one object of worship—one God and Lord.'

John 10: 35, 36, "If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world: Thou blasphemest, because I said that I am the Son of God?" Christ had previously said: "I and my Father are one." At this the Jews took up stones to stone him, "because being a man, he made himself God." It is perfectly clear, that the Jews frequently understood, or at least pretended to understand, his affirmations respecting himself, as amounting to assertions that he was truly divine. In this case, however, it is said that Jesus repelled such an interpretation of his words, by an explanation which shows that he applied to himself the word *God* only in an inferior sense.

I am not satisfied that the passage requires this exegesis. The reply of Jesus is evidently *argumentum ad hominem.* "If the Old Testament, [the divine authority of which you admit], calls them *gods* to whom the word of God was addressed (Ps. 82: 6), i. e. if it calls the magistrates of the Jews *gods*, is it not proper that I, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, should call myself the *Son of God?*" That is, if you are not offended, when your Scriptures bestow the title of *Elohim* upon civil magistrates merely, much less is there reason to be angry, when I, whom God hath distinguished from all others and made preëminent above them, and sent into the world on the designs of mercy, should call myself the *Son of God.* V. 37, 'If I prove not the truth of these assertions by miracles; then disbelieve them.' V. 38, 'But if I do, believe the proof exhibited by my miracles, *that the Father is in me and I in him.*' Now wherein did Jesus explain away anything which he had before said? The expression that *the Father is in him and he in the Father*, I do not understand as here asserting his divine nature in a direct manner. It is a phrase, which is used to express the idea that any one is *conjunctissimus cum Deo*, i. e. *most nearly and affectionately united with*

God. (See 1 John 4: 16, where it is applied to Christians; also vs. 12, 13.)

It appears plain to me, that Jesus has not asserted anything, in the whole passage, which could not be predicated of himself as sustaining the office of Messiah. He had called God *his Father;* and as the Jews supposed, or seem to have supposed, in a peculiar and appropriate sense. But it did not follow, that by using this term he meant here to assert his divine nature. Rather the contrary appears: "Say ye of him whom the Father *hath sanctified and sent into the world,*" i. e. say ye of the Son of God, etc.? Jesus does not undertake, then, to answer the question here whether he is truly divine, but simply to vindicate the language he had used against the accusations of the Jews. 'If your magistrates are called *Elohim*, is it presumption in me to call myself the *Son of God?*' This leaves the question unagitated as to his divine nature, while it vindicates the language which he had used against the malignant aspersions of the Jews, by an argument drawn from their own Scriptures.

It shows indeed, that the phrase "Son of God" does not appropriately and necessarily designate Christ as divine, but only as the incarnate mediator—as him *whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world.* As *Mediator*, as Messiah, Christ was sent into the world; as *Son* he filled, and acted in, a subordinate capacity; how then can his being *Son* in such a sense, prove him to be divine? *Son of God* indeed, by usage, has become a kind of *proper* name; and in this way it is used to designate occasionally a distinction in the Godhead which I believe to be eternal. In this manner we very commonly use the term now; and in this way the apostles sometimes use it; see Heb. 1: 1—3. But this is only an *occasional* and *secondary* use of it in the Scriptures. *Commonly* and *appropriately* it designates the incarnate Messiah, as born in a manner supernatural (Luke 1: 35, comp. 3: 38); as the special object of divine love, (Matt. 17: 5. Col. 1: 13. John 3: 35); and as exhibiting the best and highest resemblance of the Father, (Col. 1: 15. Heb. 1: 3. John 1: 14. 10: 38.

14: 10). Would theologians keep these ideas in view, I cannot help thinking they might be able to understand each other better, and to reason more conclusively.

I have thus summarily touched upon the principal texts, which are employed by Unitarians, to oppose the doctrines which I have been endeavouring to defend. Whether I have violated the laws of exegesis in doing this; and whether you or I depart most from them, in explaining the texts which seem to be at variance with the opinions that we defend; must be discussed in another letter.

I must observe, however, before I close this letter which concludes what I have at present to advance in regard to the support of your views from the Scriptures, that I do not omit making observations on some other doctrines of your Sermon, because I accede to all which you profess to believe, or approve of the mode in which you have represented the sentiments of Trinitarians. The manner in which you accuse us of treating the moral attributes of God; your appropriating to yourself and your party the exclusive belief in all that is amiable and excellent in the Deity, (pp. 15—18); your assertion, that the reproaches which you are obliged to encounter, are occasioned chiefly by your zeal to vindicate the dishonoured goodness and rectitude of God (p. 18); the manner in which you state our views of the atonement, and appropriate to your party only many important things in which we all agree, (pp. 18—21); the appropriating also to Unitarians only many views respecting the love of God, rational zeal in religion, and the benevolent virtues; and the intimations that we are opposed to all that is excellent, and rational, and worthy of belief; all this and more of the like kind, I must be permitted to say, do not seem to me well adapted to conciliate, nor very consistent with your declaration (p. 24), when you say: "Charity, forbearance, a delight in the virtues of different sects, a backwardness to censure and condemn . . . are virtues . . . which we admire and recommend." But, my dear sir, I will not trust myself one moment on this ground. I am sure that a sober review of your discourse, in prospect of your

accountability to God for the manner in which you have represented and treated so large a portion of the Christian community in this country, (some of whom at least are accustomed to think and reason for themselves, although they cannot agree with you) ;—a review after the heat of the occasion is past that prompted such representations, and induced you to place us in an attitude so debasing and repulsive—will give you more acute sensations than anything which I can say would inspire, or than I could even wish. I do not know but I may betray excitement, in my remarks. But if I have attempted to hold up you, or Unitarians, to ridicule; if I have misrepresented your sentiments; if I have charged you with treating Jehovah as the heathens did Jupiter; or endeavoured to frame my arguments so as to captivate and lead away the unwary and unthinking; or made any effort to use the *argumentum ad invidiam;* or appealed to human authorities to decide the question between us; or appealed to anything but the sober rules of exegesis; then I desire to know it, and be humbled for it. I will not say that I have not transgressed in any of these particulars; for who that knows the human heart does not know that it is deceitful? But I can say sincerely, I did not mean to transgress; and that, with all my heart, I will thank the man, who in the spirit of Christian love will point out my errors, and show me wherein I have written in such a way as to endanger or render repulsive the cause which I am advocating. That cause I believe to be just; and I should regret to employ any devices, management, stratagem, or unfairness to defend it. What other *real* interest have we, but to know the truth? And what but simple, unimpassioned argument can lead us to know it?

I retire, then, for the present, from the field of review which the remainder of your Sermon presents; for the pressure of my official duties is so great, that I am compelled to relinquish the idea, which I at first entertained, of pursuing the investigation of the topics presented by that remainder.

LETTER V.

Reverend and Dear Sir,

In p. 14 of your Sermon, you inform us of the method in which you explain those passages, which seem to speak of the divine nature of Christ. The paragraph is as follows:

"I am aware, that these remarks will be met by two or three texts, in which Christ is called God, and by a class of passages, not very numerous, in which divine properties are said to be ascribed to him. To these we offer one plain answer. We say, that it is one of the most established and obvious principles of criticism, that language is to be explained according to the known properties of the subject to which it is applied. Every man knows, that the same words convey very different ideas, when used in relation to different beings. Thus, Solomon *built* the temple in a different manner from the architect whom he employed; and God *repents* differently from man. Now, we maintain, that the known properties and circumstances of Christ, his birth, sufferings, and death, his constant habit of speaking of God as a distinct being from himself, his praying to God, his ascribing to God all his power and offices, these acknowledged properties of Christ, we say, oblige us to interpret the comparatively few passages, which are thought to make him the supreme God, in a manner consistent with his distinct and inferior nature. It is our duty to explain such texts, by the rule which we apply to other texts, in which human beings are called gods, and are said to be partakers of the divine nature, to possess all things, and to be filled with all God's fulness. These latter passages we do not hesitate to modify, and restrain, and turn from the most obvious sense, because this sense is opposed to the known properties of the beings to whom they relate; and we maintain, that we adhere to the same principle, and use no greater latitude, in explaining, as we do, the passages which are thought to support the Godhead of Christ."

I must *hesitate* however to adopt this principle, without examining its nature and tendency. On the supposition that

you admit the Bible to be a revelation from God, as you aver, permit me to ask, whether it is the object of a revelation to disclose truths which *are* NOT *known*, or are insufficiently established; or whether it is the object of a revelation, to disclose truths *already known* and established? If you answer: The latter; then your answer denies of course that it is a *revelation*. What the book of nature fully exhibits, the Scriptures do not *reveal*. Is there then anything in the Scriptures which the book of nature does not exhibit? If you concede this, then I ask: How are we, on your ground, to obtain any notion of that thing which was *unknown* before it was *revealed?* E. g. the resurrection of the body is revealed. Now it is a *known* property of the human body to corrupt and perish. Shall I construe a passage of Scripture then in such a manner, as to contradict this *known* property? If not, then I can never suppose the resurrection of the body to be revealed. I however do interpret the Scriptures so as to contradict this apparently known property of the human body—following the obvious assertion of the sacred writers, and not allowing myself to force a constructive meaning upon their language. Yet, if I understand you, I am at liberty, "to restrain, and modify, and turn the words from their most obvious sense," because this sense is opposed to the known properties of the matter of which our bodies are composed.

The case is just the same, in regard to any other fact or doctrine. What I know already of a thing, is, if you are correct, "to modify, restrain, and turn from their obvious sense," the words which are employed in revealing it because we may suppose what is revealed to be at variance with some *known* doctrines or properties. Is there not need here of great caution? If the *principle*, in some obvious cases, is to be allowed, (which I grant), yet is there not need of much more definite limitations of it than you make?

According to this principle, moreover, the Scriptures may be construed very differently, by persons of different degrees of knowledge. One man knows the properties of things, for

example, far more extensively than his neighbour. He sees that what is revealed may consist with *known properties* of things; but his neighbour, who lacks this knowledge, is unable to perceive the consistency of revelation with what he knows, and this, because his knowledge does not qualify him to judge, or because what he thinks he knows he is really ignorant of. The same text in the Bible, therefore, may be received by one, as a consistent part of revelation, and rejected by the other as inconsistent. The measure of a man's knowledge, therefore, cannot be a proper rule by which we may test the meaning of Scripture.

But you will say: 'I can never believe in the reality of a revelation, which contradicts my reason.' I accede; on the supposition that reason is understood in a proper sense. And here is the very place, where I find the greatest difficulty with your theory of interpretation. You do not carry your objections back to the proper place. If *God manifest in the flesh* be an absurdity, a palpable contradiction—"an enormous tax upon human credulity," as you aver—then the claims of the book which asserts this, are no doubt to be disregarded. What is palpable contradiction, we certainly never can believe.

But in determining what the Scriptures have taught, we have no right to say, that because any particular doctrine is repugnant to our views, therefore we will "modify, and restrain, and turn from the obvious sense," the words in which it is conveyed. The rules of exegesis are not a mass of wax, which can be moulded at pleasure into any shape that we may fancy. We do as great violence to reason—to the first principles of all reasoning—when we reject these rules, as when we admit absurdities to be true.

In case an obscure term is used, I acknowledge that clear passages, relating to the same subject are to be adduced to ascertain its meaning. If Christ had been simply called *God*, I should allow that this term *might* be explained by its use as applied to inferior beings. But when the sacred writers themselves have explained the meaning which they

attach to it, by telling us that Christ is *the God who created and governs the world;* who is omniscient and eternal; who is the object of religious worship and prayer; who is God over all or supreme God; (not to mention "the true God," and the "great God"); there is no law of exegesis, no method of interpretation which can fritter away the meaning, that is not absolute violence—a real infringement of the fundamental principles of interpretation, an abandonment of the first principles of our reason. It does appear to me, therefore, that my only resort in such a case is, to reject the authority of Scripture, if I disbelieve the doctrine. To say that they do not mean to teach, what they most obviously have taught, I cannot, *must* not. No book can be understood, no writer can be interpreted at all, by such a rule of exegesis, without forcing upon him the opinions of his readers. My system of philosophy, we will say, differs from yours. What you view to be a palpable contradiction and absurdity, I view as rational and consistent. This, we know, is not an uncommon fact. In reading a book, then, that respects the subject of our differing opinions, you hold yourself bound to construe it so as to save all that appears to you contradictory, or absurd; I interpret it just as its language obviously means, i. e. by the common laws of exegesis which do not depend on my philosophy. This book, then, may have two different meanings, according to us, in the same passage. Is this so? Can it be? Or rather, are not the laws of interpretation independent of you or me? If not, how can the meaning of any writer be ever obtained?

You and I differ, as to what John has taught in the first chapter of his gospel. I commence reading him, with the full conviction that I cannot determine *a priori*, in all respects, what the nature of God and Christ is; and also with the belief, that John wrote what is a revelation from heaven. I read John and interpret him just as I do any other author, ancient or modern, i. e. by the general rules of exegesis modified by the special circumstances and dialect in which he wrote. I am as well satisfied that he meant to assert the

truly divine nature of the Logos, as I am that he has made any assertion at all respecting him. I receive this assertion, therefore, as declaring a fact which I ought to believe, and which, if I admit his inspiration, I must believe. In the same manner I treat all other passages, which respect this subject. I come in this way to the conclusion, that Christ is truly divine; and that he has a human and divine nature so united, (I undertake not to tell in what manner), that he speaks of either nature as himself. The passages which seem to imply his inferiority to God, I find to be capable of explanation without doing violence to the language, by the obvious fact that he has two natures united, which the sacred writers seem to me so plainly to inculcate. In this way I find one consistent whole. I save the laws of exegesis. I admit, indeed, on the authority of revelation, doctrines which natural religion never taught; but *why should not a revelation teach something which natural religion did not?*

Here then I take my stand. *I abide by the simple declarations of the New Testament writers, interpreted by the common laws of language.* Such views as I take, seem to me to reconcile all the seeming discrepancies of description in regard to Christ, without doing violence to the language of any particular passage. I can believe, and do believe, that the sacred writers are consistent, without any explanation but such as the laws of interpretation admit and require.

On the other hand; when you read the first of John you say: 'The known properties of Christ must modify the description.' How then are those properties *known?* By the same writer, the same authority, the same revelation. But what can give to one part of John's book, any more credit than to the other part? You will say, that you can understand better how Christ can be inferior to God, than how he can be divine. Granting that this might be the case—is a revelation merely to teach us things which are obvious? May it not disclose those which are more difficult, and cannot be discovered by unassisted reason? If the latter, how can you aver that Christ may not be revealed as a divine person?

To show *a priori* that this is impossible, or absurd, is really out of the question. The religion of nature teaches nothing for or against this fact. The simple question then is: What has John said? and not, What has your philosophy led you to regard as probable or improbable? And I must be allowed to say again: If John has not taught us that Christ is truly divine, I am utterly unable, by the laws of exegesis, to make out that he has asserted anything in his whole gospel.

If I believed then, as you do, that a Saviour with a human and divine nature is "an enormous tax on human credulity," I should certainly reject the authority of John. To violate the laws of exegesis in order to save his credit, I could regard as nothing more than striving to keep up a fictitious belief in divine revelation. It is what I cannot do; and what no man ought to do. It would be impossible for me, with your views, to hesitate at all, about giving up entirely the old idea of the divine inspiration and authority of the sacred books. How can they be divine, if they teach palpable absurdities? And that they do teach what you call palpable absurdities, I feel quite satisfied can be amply proved, from the simple application of the laws of interpretation that are established on an immovable basis.

You have, however, undertaken to vindicate your method of construing the Scriptures, by intimating the necessity of interpreting several seemingly unlimited assertions in respect to *Christians*, in the same way as you interpret many in respect to Christ. "Recollect," you say, "the unqualified manner in which it is said of Christians, that they possess all things, know all things, and do all things." And again, in order to show how we may "modify and restrain and turn from the obvious sense," the passages that respect the divinity of Christ, you say: "It is our duty to explain such texts by the rule which we apply to other texts, in which human beings are called gods, and are said to be partakers of the divine nature, to know and possess all things, and to be filled with all God's fulness."

I have already sufficiently examined the manner in which

the Bible calls men *gods*. There is, and can be, no mistake here; for instead of attributing to them divine attributes, it always accompanies the appellations with such adjuncts as guard us against mistake. It does not call them *God*, and then add, that the same God is meant who is the *creator* of the universe.

Nor does the New Testament, (your *sole* statute book), anywhere call men *God*. Will you produce the instance? That the appellation God, as applied to Christ, is bestowed under circumstances totally diverse from those in which it is applied to men in the Old Testament, is a fact too obvious to need further explanation. The Hebrew word אֱלֹהִים (*Elohim*) had plainly a latitude more extensive, i. e. it was capable of a greater variety of use, than the Greek word Θεός. Can you produce from the Greek Scriptures, i. e. the New Testament, an instance where Θεός is applied to any *man* whatever?

In regard to the assertion, "that Christians are made partakers of the divine nature," (2 Pet. 1: 4), a mistake about the meaning is scarcely possible: "Whereby [i. e. by the gospel] are given unto us," says the apostle, "exceeding great and precious promises, that *by these* ye might be *partakers of the divine nature*." But how? He answers this question: "Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." That is, by moral purification you will become assimilated to God, or partakers of that holy nature which he possesses. Does the context here afford any ground for mistake?

In 1 John 2: 20, Christians are said to have "an unction from the Holy One, and *to know all things*." In the preceding verse, the apostle had been describing apostates, who forsook the Christian cause because they were not sincerely attached to it. The case of real Christians, who have an unction from the Holy One, is different. They "know all things." And what means this? The sequel explains it. "I have not written unto you," says he, "because *ye know not the truth*; but because *ye know it*, and that no lie is of

the truth." To "know all things," then, plainly means here to know all that pertains to Christian doctrine and duty, so as to persevere and not apostatize from the truth as others had done.

Is this however asserting (as you affirm in your Sermon) in "an *unqualified* manner, that Christians know all things?"

In John 14: 26, the Holy Ghost is promised to the apostles, "*to teach them all things*, and to bring all things to their remembrance," whatsoever Christ had said unto them. Again, John 16: 23, the "Spirit of truth is to guide the disciples *into all truth*;" and in 1 John 2: 27, the anointing which Christians have received, is said to "teach them all things." In all these cases, the context leaves no room to doubt, that "all things essential to Christian doctrine and practice" is meant. No person, I presume, ever understood these passages as meaning, that the apostles or Christians should be endowed with omniscience.

Yet in the other case, where Christ is asserted to be *God*, the context is such, that the great body of Christians, in every age, have understood the sacred writers as asserting that he was truly divine. Is there no difference between the two cases? You make them indeed the same, in respect to the principle of interpretation. To my mind, the difference is this, viz. that in the one case, the adjuncts *prevent* you from ascribing omniscience to Christians, while in the other, they *lead you necessarily* to ascribe divine properties to Christ, unless you "turn their meaning from the obvious sense" so far as to transgress the fundamental maxims of interpreting language.

In 1 Cor. 3: 22, the apostle says to the Corinthian churches: "All things are yours;" and the same apostle speaks of himself (2 Cor. 6: 10), as "having nothing, and yet *possessing all things*." In the first case, the context adds: "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come—all are yours; and ye are Christ's;" i. e. simply, (when the phraseology is construed as elsewhere), let no man glory in this or that particular teacher,

for all teachers belong to the church, and all things in the present and future world will minister to the good of the church. In other words: Why should you covet exclusive individual possessions, when you have an interest in the whole? Refrain, therefore, from the spirit of jealousy and contention.

The second case is merely antithesis. The apostle evidently asserts, (compare the context), that although he has little indeed of this world's good, yet he possesses a far more excellent and satisfactory good, in comparison of which all else is nothing. In the same sense, we every day speak of a man's *all*, meaning that which he most desires and loves best.

I can no more see here, than in the other instances already discussed, why you should affirm that Christians are said "in an *unqualified* manner to possess all things."

One expression still remains. In Eph. 3: 19, the apostle exhibits his fervent wishes, that the Christians at Ephesus might "be filled with all the fulness of God." By comparing this expression, as applied to Christ in Col. 1: 19. 2: 9, with John 1: 14, 16, and Eph. 1: 23, it appears evident, that by the *fulness of God* is meant the abundant gifts and graces, which were bestowed on Christ, and through him upon his disciples; John 1: 16. Eph. 1: 23. When Paul prays, therefore, that the church at Ephesus might be "filled with the fulness of God," he prays simply, that they might be abundantly replenished with the gifts and graces peculiar to the Christian religion. But how does such an affirmation concern the principle of exegesis in question?

I am well satisfied, that the course of reasoning in which you have embarked, and the principles by which you explain away the divinity of the Saviour, must eventually lead most men who approve them to the conclusion, that the Bible is not of divine origin, and does not oblige us to belief or obedience. I do not aver, that they will certainly lead *you* there. The remains of your former education and belief may still serve to guard you against the bolder conclusions of some of your brethren, who have not been placed under instruction such as you enjoyed in early life. You have more serious views

of the importance of religion, than many, perhaps than most, of those who speculate with you. *Consistency*, too, will afford strong inducement not to give up the divine authority of the Scriptures. Yet many of your younger brethren have no inconsistency to fear, by adopting such views. Deeming what you have publicly taught them to be true, viz. that it is "no crime to believe with Mr. Belsham," who boldly and plainly declares that the *Scriptures are not the word of God;* feeling the inconsistency, (as I am certain some of them will and do feel it), of violating the fundamental rules of interpretation, in order to make the apostles speak, as in their apprehension they ought to speak; and unable to reconcile what the apostles say with their own views; they will throw off the restraints which the old ideas of the inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures impose upon them, and receive them simply on the ground, on which they place any other writings of a moral and religious nature.

I make no pretensions to uncommon foresight, in regard to this subject. I certainly do not say these things with invidious designs, and for the sake of kindling the fire of contention. Very far from it. On the contrary; I believe that the parties now contending here, will have no quiet, until this ground be openly taken on the part of those who side with you. For myself, I view it as incomparably more desirable, in every point of view, that the authority of the Scripture should at once be renounced, and its claims to divine inspiration rejected, than that such rules of exegesis should be introduced, as make the Scripture speak *nolens volens* whatever any party may desire. Avowed unbelief in the divine authority of the Scriptures can never continue long, as I would hope, in the present day of light and examination. Such a state of things may pass away, with the generation who are actors in it. But it is a more difficult matter to purge away the stain, which Christianity may contract by violated laws of interpretation; because those who indulge in such a violation, profess to respect the Christian religion, and to acknowledge its divine original. They may therefore obtain, and hold, for

a long time, great influence over the mass of people, who are not accustomed to examine in a critical manner the nicer points of theology. If opponents to the sentiments in question lift up the voice of warning, they may not be heard. They are liable to the imputation of bigotry, or illiberality, or ignorance. But when men *professedly* cast off their respect to the authority of the Scriptures, the case becomes different, and the great body of plain and sober people will revolt.

In making these observations on the nature and probable consequences of your system of exegesis, which explains away the Deity of Christ, I do not feel that I am building castles in the air to amuse my own imagination. My duties have necessitated me for some time past, to be conversant with the history of exegesis, as it has of late appeared in Germany; a country which, in half a century, has produced more works on criticism and sacred literature than the world contains besides. About fifty* years since, Semler, Professor of Divinity at Halle, began to lecture and publish on the subject of interpretation, in a manner that excited the attention of the whole German empire. The grand principle by which he explained away whatever he did not think proper to believe, was that which has since been called *accommodation.* He maintained that the apostles and the Saviour often admitted representations and doctrines into their instructions, which were calculated merely for the purpose of persuading the Jews, by being *accommodated* to their prejudices; but which were not intended to be a general directory of sentiment. In this way, whatever was inconsistent with his own views he was led to call *accommodation*; and thus he at once expunged it in effect from the list of Christian doctrines.

Semler's original genius and great learning soon gave currency to his views in Germany, where a system of theology and exegesis had prevailed, which in not a few respects needed reformation. Since his time a host of writers, (many of them possessed of distinguished talents and most extensive erudi-

* Some seventy years now, at the period of issuing the *present* edition.

tion), have arisen, who have examined, explained, modified, and defended, the doctrine of *accommodation*. A more recent shape of exegesis in Germany is, the solution of all the miraculous facts related in the Bible, by considerations which are affirmed to be drawn from the idiom and ignorance of antiquity in general, and in particular of the sacred writers themselves. Thus, with Eichhorn, the account of the creation and fall of man, is merely a poetical and philosophical speculation of some ingenious person, on the origin of the world and of evil. (Urgeschichte, passim.) So, in regard to the offering up of Isaac by Abraham, he says: "The Godhead could not have required of Abraham so horrible a crime; and there can be no justification, palliation, or excuse for this pretended command of the Divinity." He then explains it in his own way: 'Abraham *dreamed* that he must offer up Isaac; and according to the superstition of the times, he regarded it as a divine admonition. He prepared to execute the mandate, which his dream had conveyed to him. A lucky accident, (probably the rustling of a ram who was entangled in the bushes), hindered it; and this, according to ancient notions, was the voice of the divinity.' (Bibliothek, Band I. s. 45, etc.)

The same writer represents the history of the Mosaic legislation, at mount Sinai, in a curious manner. Moses ascended the top of Sinai, and built a fire there, [how he found wood on this barren rock, or raised it up to the top, Eichhorn does not tell us], which was consecrated to the worship of God, and before which he prayed. Here an unexpected and tremendous thunder storm occurred. He seized the occasion, in order to proclaim the laws, which he had composed in his retirement, as the statutes of Jehovah; thus leading the people to believe that Jehovah had conversed with him. Not that he was a deceiver; but he really believed that the occurrence of such a thunder storm was a sufficient proof of the fact, that Jehovah had spoken to him, or sanctioned the work in which he had been engaged. (Bibliothek, Band I. Theil 1. s. 76, etc.). The prophecies of the Old Testament are,

according to him, *patriotic wishes*, expressed with all the fire and elegance of poetry, for the future prosperity and a future deliverer of the Jewish nation. (Propheten, Biblioth., Einleit., passim.)

In like manner, C. F. Ammon, professor of theology at Erlangen, tells us, in respect to the miracle of Christ's walking on the water, that "to walk on the sea, is not to stand on the waves as if they were solid ground, (as Jerome *dreams*), but to walk through the waves so far as the shoals reached, and then to swim." (Pref. to edit. of Ernesti Inst. Interpret. p. 12). So in regard to the miracle of the loaves and fishes (Matt. 14: 15), he says, that 'Jesus probably distributed some loaves and fishes which he had, to those who were around him, and thus excited, by his example, others among the multitude who had provisions, to distribute them in like manner.' (p. 16.)

Thiess, in his commentary on Acts, explains the miraculous effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii.), in the following manner: "It is not uncommon," says he, "in those countries, for a violent gust of wind to strike only a particular spot or house. Such a gust is commonly accompanied by the electric fluid; and the sparks of this are scattered all around. These float about the chamber, become apparent, and light upon the disciples. They kindle into enthusiasm at this; and believe the promise of their master is now to be performed. This enthusiasm spectators assemble to witness; and instead of preaching as before in Hebrew, each one uses his own native tongue to proclaim his feelings."

I have not followed the words of Thiess through the whole, but have given the substance of his views in my two last sentences. Such was the outpouring of the Spirit; and such the gift of tongues.

The same Thiess (Comm. on Chap. iii.) represents the miraculous cure, by Peter, of the man who was lame from his birth, in a very singular way. "This man," says he, "was lame only according to report. He never walked any; and so the people believed that he could not walk. . . . . Pe-

ter and John however, being more sagacious, *threatened* him. 'In the name of the Messiah,' said they, 'stand up.' The word *Messiah* had a magical power. He stood up. Now one saw that he could walk. To prevent the compassion of men from being turned into rage, [at his deceit], he betook himself to the most sagacious party, and connected himself with the apostles."

The case of Ananias' falling down dead is thus represented by the same writer: "Ananias fell down terrified; but probably he was carried out and buried while still alive."

Heinrichs, however, who produces this Comment of Thiess, relates another mode of explaining the occurrence in question, viz. that *Peter stabbed* Ananias; "which," says Heinrichs, "does not at all disagree with the vehement and easily exasperated temper of Peter." (Nov. Test. Koppianum, Vol. iii. Partic. ii. pp. 355—357, etc.)

You may smile, my dear Sir, or shudder at these explanations; but I am entirely unable to see how they imply a greater liberty than you take with John 1: 1. Rom. 9: 5, and many other passages.

Numerous systems of Hermeneutica, i. e. the Art of Interpretation, have been written and published in Germany, on this plan. Meyer, in a very laboured system of Hermeneutica of the Old Testament, in two large octavos, has a body of rules, by which everything miraculous is to be explained away. He concedes that there is the same objection to admitting any one miracle, as to admitting all. He therefore rejects the whole. So Bauer, in his Hermeneutica; and a multitude of others.

In the course of the discussions which these principles have excited in Germany, the question about Christ's divinity has been almost entirely forgotten. When the contest first began, this point among others was warmly contested. But the fundamental questions, whether the Scriptures are divinely inspired, and whether the doctrine of *accommodation* can be used in all its latitude in interpreting them, soon took the place of this. *Accommodation* has been sifted, attacked, de-

fended, explained, moderated, modified, itself *accommodated;* so that at last it is nearly driven from the ground, and the plain and simple rules of grammatical interpretation are triumphant among the best part of the German critics.

In the mean time, they have not returned to the principles of their Lutheran Symbols. Very far from it. While they allow that John, and Peter, and Paul, did believe and teach the doctrine of Christ's divinity and of the atonement, they hold themselves under no obligation to receive them. De Wette, who has recently published a System of Theology and is Professor of the same at the University of Berlin,* maintains that the Pentateuch was composed about the time of the captivity; that the Jewish ritual was of gradual formation, accessions being made to it by superstition; and that the book of Chronicles, (which is filled with scraps and inconsistencies), was foisted into the Canon by some of the priesthood who wished to exalt their own order. His *Beiträge,* which contained these sentiments, was published before the death of Griesbach, and came out recommended by him; who says: 'If you object to the young literary adventurer [De Wette], that he has endeavoured to bring Judaism into disrepute, my answer is: This is no more than Paul himself has laboured to do.' (Pref. to Beiträge.)

In his book *De morte Christi expiatoria,* (on the Atonement of Christ), he represents Christ as disappointed that the Jews would not hearken to him as a *moral teacher* simply; which was the first character he assumed. Christ then assumed the character of a *prophet,* and asserted his divine mission, in order that the Jews might be induced to listen to him. Finding that they would not do this, and that they were determined to destroy him, in order not to lose the whole object of his mission, and to convert necessity into an

* This was the fact, when the former editions of this work were published. But many years since he was dismissed from his place there, on the ground of a supposed *political* offence; and since this, he has been at Bâsle in Switzerland.

occasion of giving himself credit, he gave out that his death itself would be *expiatory*.

Yet De Wette holds a most exalted rank in Germany. I doubt whether Germany can boast of an oriental scholar, or a literary man, who has more admirers than De Wette. Gesenius, Professor at Halle, has spoken of him, in a letter recently received, in the highest terms; and selects and recommends him, among all the literati, critics, and orientalists, of Germany, as most deserving of special acquaintance and confidence.

Both of these gentlemen are *Professors of Divinity* in Universities; both men of great genius, and profound erudition; men, too, who stand at the head perhaps of oriental literature in the German empire, not to say in the whole world.

What shall we say, now, of De Wette? That he is *not* a Christian? Surely he would look with disdain on any man who should think of such an accusation, and tax him with the highest degree of illiberality and superstition.

Perhaps you will say: 'What is all this to us? We do not avow or defend such opinions.' True, I answer; at *present* you do not avow or defend them. A short time since *they* did not. But as soon as their numbers increased, so that they began to be fearless of consequences, and when their antagonists urged the laws of exegesis upon them, they abandoned the ground of defending the divine authenticity of the Bible at once. A few years since, the state of the question in Germany, in many respects, was similar to what it now is here. At present, most of the German critics, (rejecting *accommodation* and casting off all ideas of the divine origin of the Scriptures), are disputing with great zeal the questions: Whether a miracle is possible? Whether God and nature are one and the same thing? Whether the Jews ever expected any Messiah? Some time ago many of their critics maintained that *no* Messiah was *predicted* in the Old Testament; but now they question even whether the Jews had any expecta-

tion of one. Whether Christ actually rose from the dead, was long ago disputed; and now it would seem, that they have gone on so far beyond this, as to have come, (so one would be inclined to think), nearly to the end of questions on *theology*. It is difficult to say what is to come next.

It needs now only a moderate acquaintance with German reasoners and critics, (a thing which is fast coming in), to induce young men to go with them, who set out with your maxim, that "to believe with Mr. Belsham is no crime." No man can read these writers, without finding a great deal of excellent matter in them, well arranged, and of real utility. I venture to add, that no man can read them, and ever after take up Priestley, Belsham, Carpenter, Yates, Lindsey, or any other of the recent English Unitarian writers, as *critics*, but with disgust. Cappe is the only one whom I have seen, that appears to have studied diligently his Bible. He was evidently a man of thought, and a lover of biblical study. But the incomparably greater acquisitions of the German critics, in every department of study, spread a charm over their writings for the lover of discussion and literature, that is not often found in productions of this nature. I must add, that much as I differ in sentiment from them, and *fundamentally subversive of Christianity* as I believe their views to be, I am under great obligations to them for the instructions they have given me; and specially for convincing me, that we need nothing more than the simple rules of exegesis, and a candid and believing mind, to see in the Scriptures, with overpowering evidence, all the substantial and important doctrines which have commonly been denominated *orthodox*.

Such has been the impression on me, from reading German writers. And with such impressions, I can never regret the time that I have spent in studying them. Abler advocates than they for the fashionable philosophy, which is endeavouring to explain away the book of God, I do not expect to find.

Si Pergama dextrâ
Defendi possent, etiam hâc defensa fuissent.

Able however as they are, my mind returns from the study of them with an impression more deep, radical, and satisfactory than ever before, that the great doctrines of the gospel, commonly denominated *evangelical* or *orthodox*, are the doctrines of the Scriptures, and are the truth of God. My views as to the exegesis of particular texts, in some cases, have been changed by the study of philology and interpretation. I should not rely for the proof of doctrines now, on some texts which I once thought contained such proof. But my impressions of the real truth and importance of evangelical doctrines, I can truly say, are greatly strengthened.

Before you pronounce sentence upon the German expositors and critics to whom I have referred above, I trust you will give them a hearing. I can hardly think it probable, that with the maxims in regard to reasoning about the Scriptures which you defend, you should not, at last, go full length with the most liberal of them all. The difference between their sentiments and yours, is immeasurably less than the difference between your sentiments now, and those which you avowed when you first became a preacher of the gospel. A mind capable of reasoning and thinking in such a manner as yours, must necessarily, as it seems to me, come to the same conclusions with Eichhorn, and Paulus, and Henke, and Eckermann, and Herder, and other distinguished men of the new German school, when it begins to reason with such maxims as those which you adopt.

You may be ready, perhaps, to express your surprise, that I should commend the study of such writers as those whom I have quoted. I am well aware, indeed, that the serious mind revolts at the glaring impiety of such comments as those which I have produced. But after all, if a man were to judge and condemn these very writers by a few selections of this nature, it would be hasty. On points which are not concerned with the special doctrines of Christianity; in illustrating critical and literary history, philology, natural history, and grammatical exegesis—in a word, as to everything literary or scientifical that pertains to the Bible; who can enter into

competition with recent German writers? But it should be understood, that there are writers on these subjects, in Germany, who are what is denominated *orthodox*, as well as those of a different character which I have just mentioned. The lover of acute, thorough-going, radical discussion, will lose much, if he does not cultivate an acquaintance with both these classes of writers.

I know, indeed, that you are an advocate for unlimited research. For myself, I have long practised upon this principle. And I cannot but think the cautious fears of many of those with whom I agree in sentiment, in respect to the limits of study, though honourable to the spirit of piety which they cherish, and indicative of real interest and concern for the prosperity of the church, are not well founded. The fundamental principle of Protestantism is, that *the Bible is the sufficient and only rule of faith and practice.* To know what the Bible teaches, then, is the great object of all religious knowledge. To understand this, (as to acquire everything else), study and diligence are necessary. Men are not *inspired* now, as the apostles and primitive Christians were, to understand all truth. Men are imperfect, and have imperfect knowledge. No one sect, party, or body of men, can claim absolute perfection of knowledge or virtue. And as a great many points of inquiry, (interesting and important ones too), may be managed by men of sobriety, in the use of only their natural intellect and their resources of learning, the man who loves the book of God, and desires the most extensive acquaintance with it which he can possibly make, will not neglect their works, nor any other source of knowledge within his power. It was a noble maxim of a heathen: *Fas est ab hoste doceri;* i. e. *we may receive instruction from an enemy.* Christians too often forget this, and permit antipathy to particular sentiments to exclude them from all the profit, which might be derived from a more enlarged acquaintance with the writings of opponents. Believing as I do, that many who are arrayed against the sentiments that I espouse, are not destitute of sense, or of learning, and are not to be

despised, I am inclined always to see how they vindicate their cause. If I am not convinced by *their* arguments, I at least become better satisfied with *my own*, and more able to defend them in consequence of such an investigation. But if I could not practise upon the noble maxim, *fas est ab hoste doceri*, I would at least apply another one to vindicate the study of the German writers, and justify myself for even recommending it in proper cases. I would say, (as was said in a different connection and for a different object: *Egyptii sunt, spoliemus; They are Egyptians, let us take their spoils.* Shall I not accept the good which they proffer me, and proffer me in a more scientific manner, and in a better digested and more lucid form than I can elsewhere find? Without hesitation I answer: Yes.

I cannot help viewing the subject in another light. Every student in theology, certainly every Christian minister, ought to be established in the truth and able to "*convince gainsayers.*" How can he do this, if he does not know what these gainsayers allege? Is he to engage in war against the foes of truth, without knowing the weapons by which his enemies are to assail him? It is a mistaken system of education, indeed, which teaches him thus. It is a mistaken arrangement, which thrusts out a young man upon the church, unacquainted with the nature of its enemies' assaults, and liable of course to become the victim of the first powerful attack that is made upon him. Without any doubt, private Christians had better have little or nothing to do with all such grounds of dispute; but it is a shame for a minister of the gospel, who has the opportunity, not to seize upon every advantage in his power, to render himself as able as possible to defend the cause which he has espoused.

I may venture to add a still better authority, in order to confirm these reasonings. An inspired apostle has directed Christians to *prove all things*, and to *hold fast that which is good.* How does *he* comply with the spirit of this direction, who never examines any views that differ from his own, but settles down with the full conviction that he is right, and that

all who differ from him are wrong? As no man now is inspired, and no man therefore is free from some error, does it not become those who are to be "set for the defence of the truth," to examine as far as it may be in their power the dissentient views of others, who have called themselves Christians, and who lay claim to an extensive understanding of the word of God? Such an examination will enlarge their views, and render them more able to oppose error and to defend truth.

Such are my reasons for pursuing the study of German writers, and for commending the study of them to others. Truth has nothing to fear from examination. If the sentiments that I espouse will not stand the test of investigation, then I will abandon them. I never shall willingly embrace any sentiments, except on such a condition. But in respect to the study of the more *liberal* (so called) German writers, I fear no injury from it, in the end, to the sentiments denominated *evangelical*. Exegesis has come, by discussion among them, to a solid and permanent science. That the scriptural writers taught substantially what we believe to be *orthodoxy*, is now conceded by their most able expositors.

There is another point of view, in which the subject may be regarded. The person who reads their works, will see what the spirit of doubt and unbelief can do in respect to the Book of God, and where it will carry the men who entertain it. It is indeed a most affecting and awful lesson. But the exhibition of it has merely begun among us. The progress of the sentiments which you defend, fully illustrates the nature of its advancements. A short time since, almost all the Unitarians of New England were simply Arians. Now, there are scarcely any of the younger preachers, who have not outstripped you and become simple *Humanitarians*. Such was the case in Germany. The divinity of Christ was early assailed; inspiration was next doubted and impugned; and this is already begun here. Natural religion next comes in order; and the simple question between the parties here

must soon be, whether *natural* or *revealed* religion is our guide and our hope.

For myself, it is my real conviction that the sooner matters come to this issue the better. The parties will then understand each other; and (what is more) the *public* will then understand the subject of dispute. I cannot think that they do at present. It is but very recently, that explicit declarations have been made in print, by you and your friends. And though with such views as I possess, I cannot help feeling the most sincere regret that such sentiments should be propagated, yet I can never do otherwise than applaud that ingenuousness, which openly avows sentiments that are more privately inculcated. I shall be ready to confess my apprehensions are quite erroneous, if the lapse of a few years more does not produce the undisguised avowal of the German divinity, in all its latitude.* I anticipate this, because I believe that the laws of exegesis, when thoroughly understood and applied without any party bias, will necessarily lead men to believe that the apostles inculcated, for substance, those doctrines which are now called *orthodox*. And as there probably will be not a few, who will reject these doctrines, my apprehension is, that to take the German ground will be deemed both ingenuous and expedient.

Believing however as I now do, while my convictions remain, I must act agreeably to them. I hope I shall never be guilty of exercising an exclusive or persecuting spirit. But while my present views last, I cannot look with indifference on the great contest, which is pending in this part of our country. I must regard the opinions which you have avowed in your sermon, to be *fundamentally subversive* of what appear to me to be the peculiarities of the Christian system. If the doctrine of Christ's divinity and humanity be not true, nor the doctrine of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, and of pardon by it; if human nature be not of itself entirely

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* See POSTSCRIPT, at the end of this Letter.

destitute of holiness that may fit men for heaven, and does not need special regenerating and sanctifying grace; then I know not what there is in the Christian system that very much concerns our duty or our interest, which is not taught by the principles of natural religion; nor what there is, for which it is our duty to contend. The great question at present, between you and me, is: What does the Bible teach in relation to the subjects proposed? For our answer to this question, you and I stand accountable to the Judge of quick and dead; and as ministers of his gospel, and interpreters of his word, we are placed under an awful responsibility. If either of us violate the reason which God has given us, in our inquiries; or are led by partial views, by passion, by prejudice, by thirst for popularity with our friends, or a fear of reproach from those whom we are obliged to consider as opponents; Christ will require from us an account of our conduct. When I think on this, and look back and ask myself, whether I have conducted this whole dispute with a view to my account, and in the fear of God; I cannot but feel solicitude, lest through the deceitfulness of the human heart, something may have escaped me which may prove prejudicial, in some way or other, to the promotion of real truth. If you see this, my dear Sir, tell me where and what it is. We have no real interest, but to know, believe, and obey the truth. And supposing the truth to be what it now appears to my mind to be, I cannot believe otherwise than that you are endeavouring to inculcate principles *radically subversive* of the gospel of Christ. Will you do me the justice to believe, that I may have honestly formed such an opinion, without taking my faith from creeds, or grounding it on tradition, and without the spirit that would establish an Inquisition, or lord it over the consciences of men, or treat you with disrespect?

In a word; with those who have the convictions that I possess of the nature and importance of the gospel system, it can never admit of a question, whether they are to make all the

opposition in their power, (provided it be done in the spirit of Christian candour and benevolence), to the prevalence of sentiments like yours. I cannot but view the question between us as amounting to this: Whether we shall retain Christianity, or reject all but the name? If I am wrong, may the Lord forgive me, and grant me better views. If you are wrong, my heart's desire and prayer to God is, that the same blessing may be bestowed on you.

Allowing that I, and those with whom I act, are sincere in our belief, you yourself would say, that we should be justly chargeable with the greatest inconsistency, did we not feel strong desires to resist the innovations that are attempted upon many important doctrines of our theology. Permit me to add, that real charity may sometimes attribute strong feelings, and a deep interest on this subject, to ardent benevolence towards those whom we think to be in a dangerous condition, rather than to party zeal, blind credulity, and ignorance, or an assuming and injurious spirit.

And now, to bring these already protracted letters to a close, you will permit me respectfully and seriously to solicit, that you would look back and review the Sermon which has occasioned these remarks. Have you represented the sentiments of the great body of Christians in this country correctly? Have you produced the arguments on which they rely? Have you treated them with respect, with gentleness, with tenderness? Has your simple aim been to reason with them, to convince them, and not to hold them up in such an attitude as to excite disgust, or scorn and derision? Whatever your *aim* may have been, the *fact* is, that you have awakened, in all those who differ from you, a deep sensation of an intentional injury on your part to their feelings, of contumely, and of misrepresentation of their views. Look then with a Christian eye on the unhappy and distracted state of the churches in this land, the glory of all lands. When will our contentions cease? When shall we bring a united offering to our common Lord, if men, like you, who stand in eminent

and responsible stations, treat those whom they profess to own as *Christian brethren* in such a manner, and strive to degrade and render them contemptible?

My dear Sir, I do think these are things, which, when you enter your closet to lift up your soul to God, you are bound by sacred obligations to consider. I do not bring these as charges against you, in order to wound your feelings, I speak of the impressions which your Discourse, (universally so far as I know), has excited in the bosoms of those who espouse the sentiments which you condemn. If their impressions are without reason, the wrong may indeed fall upon them. But in reviewing the subjects that have already come under my notice, there appears more reason for those impressions, than a lover of Christian meekness and benevolence can approve. When the hours of excitement and the stimulus of party feeling are gone by, you and I shall stand at the bar of that divine Saviour, who searches the hearts and tries the reins of men. There we shall certainly know, whether it will be our condemnation that we have loved him and honoured him more than he can claim. There we shall know, whether we need his atoning blood; whether we are permitted to treat with contumely those who place their hopes of salvation in it, and to declare to them that the God, whom the great body of the faithful in every age have worshipped, is a malignant and detestable being. My dear Sir, this is indeed no trifling matter. We are immortal beings. We must live forever; and our eternal destiny is in the hands of that Redeemer, about whose dignity and glory we are contending.

When I think on this, I cannot but feel, that the question between us is of deep and radical interest, as it respects our eternal salvation. If the God whom I am bound to adore, has not only revealed himself in the book of nature, but has clearly disclosed his glory in the gospel of Christ, and I mistake after all a revelation so clear; or induced by party feeling, or erroneous philosophy, reject the testimony which he has given; the mistake must be tremendous in its conse-

quences; the rejection will justly incur the divine displeasure. With all this however fully before me, I do not hesitate; I cannot doubt respecting it. When I behold the glory of the Saviour, as revealed in the gospel, I am constrained to cry out with the believing apostle: My Lord and my God! And when my departing spirit shall quit these mortal scenes, and wing its way to the world unknown, with my latest breath I desire to pray, as the expiring martyr did: LORD JESUS, RECEIVE MY SPIRIT!

POSTSCRIPT.

In republishing this little volume, after so many years have elapsed, it is not without some hesitation, that I have admitted into this edition the preceding account of the state of theology in Germany, which was drawn up about the year 1820 when these Letters were first published. It is no desire that I have, to show that my anticipations at that period have been fully realized, which has induced me again to repeat this part of my original publication. The simple account of the matter is, that I have permitted the sketch in question to remain in this edition, in order that it may assist the reader in forming a judgment, at the present time, as to what fruits he is to expect from such beginnings as those in Germany, and to admonish him to take good heed that he listen very attentively to the monition contained in the old proverb: *Obsta principiis.* The fruits, in our own country, of beginnings like to those in Germany during the years 1770—1800, are now plain and evident to all attentive observers. Had Dr. Channing lived until the present time, it is difficult to say what position he would have taken. But we know what position many of his friends and followers have taken. Mr. Norton's attack on the Old Testament comes nothing short of Ultra-neology. Substantially the same is true of Prof. Palfrey's Lectures on the Pentateuch. Unitarian Periodicals are filled with the like sentiments. Dr. Noyes, in translations of the Old Testament, has inserted notices respecting the several books translated, which are of the like tenor; and it is generally understood, that in the Theological School at Cambridge, with which he is connected, there is,

at least in their own circle, an open and explicit renunciation of the divine inspiration and authority of the Old Testament Scriptures. But above all, the Rev. Theodore Parker, in his book *Of Religion*, and other publications, has fully and openly taken the ultimate ground to which the principles in question naturally and even necessarily lead, in the mind of a bold and consistent man. I do honour to his frankness and openness, in being willing to appear what in reality he is, a doubter not only of all inspiration, but of all that is miraculous or supernatural. He regards reason and the moral sense in man, as his highest source of revelation; and by these all else is to be tried and adjudged. *His* reason bids him to reject all miracles; to regard the Old Testament and the New as full of errors, contradictions, and absurdities; to regard Christ himself only as an unusually able and excellent man, and teacher of morality, i. e. unusual for that period; while he was in fact not only peccable, but has even made some mistakes, (for which Mr. Parker undertakes to apologize). His apostles and followers, moreover, were not only fallible men, but they have shown, in their writings, not a little of superstition, as well as a great many mistakes. In a word, (as the phrase is), he has gone for the whole. The humble Christian, who is accustomed to look to his God and Saviour and Bible with reverential awe, is startled at this; and no wonder. But after all, I must think better of such a frank and open avowal of sentiment, than of any concealed course of conduct; and I cannot but deem it an honourable trait of character in Mr. Parker. In my view, he has greatly the advantage, in respect to consistency and frankness and courage, over those Unitarians who are at variance with him, and who still cherish principles that must, at least if *logic* has any part to act, inevitably end in bringing them to the same views as those of Mr. Parker. He is willing to take the responsibility of his real sentiments, and to come before the public on this ground;* they decline the hazard of do-

* On reading this to a friend, whose locality enables him better to know Mr. Parker's pastoral development than myself, he suggested that it is now generally understood, that Mr. Parker is constantly in the habit of using *orthodox* terms in his prayers and preaching, even to such a degree that many of his undistinguishing hearers deny his *heterodoxy*. If this be so, I must recall all that I have said above, about his straightforwardness and explicitness. But I cannot help thinking that there is some mistake about this matter, and that he would not degrade himself by practising any imposition of this nature.

ing this, and feel that it is risking too much for themselves and their cause, to be so openly explicit. They have even gone so far as virtually to excommunicate Mr. Parker, and some of them actually begin to call him an *infidel*. Some *Creed*, then, they would seem secretly to have, by which Mr. Parker is actually tried, if not actually amenable to it, and in their view condemned. I would hope, therefore, that the orthodox will no longer be reproached for having a *Creed*, or for adhering to it. And what now is Mr. Parker's *heresy*? It is not for me to enter into the dispute between him with his adherents, and those who begin to call themselves *evangelical* (!?) Unitarians. '*Inter* TALES *certantes, quis dijudicabit*?' Geneva and Boston show us, (after all the strong professions of Unitarians in favour of unlimited liberty of religious opinion, and after loudly and often asserting the criminality of making any man responsible for his religious views), that only an opportunity for the *safe* exercise of power is wanting, to convert the mass of *liberal Christians* into propagandists of their party views, by appeals to force, i. e. to the power of the magistracy, or to the more dreaded power of virtual excommunication. These are not the first lessons of this kind which are recorded on the pages of faithful history. They probably are not the last, which even the present generation will be called to learn. It lies upon the very face of all this matter, at least such is my serious apprehension, that nothing but *power* is wanting, among some of the leading zealous Unitarians, to exclude the orthodox not only from Cambridge University, (which has already so long and so effectually been done), but to exclude them from all active and influential participation in affairs of church, state, civil office, and education, so far as the government has the control of any of these matters.

There are men, indeed, and I would hope that they are not few, in the Unitarian party, who would not intentionally do such things. But I am compelled to believe, that the leaders of the dominant party would at once go full length and breadth in all matters over which they had control, if they did not fear a reaction. In the mean time, the Trinitarians are, as yet, by far the greater majority of the State; and if such battles are to be fought, I am greatly mistaken if they may not be relied on as ready to take their place, in the ranks of those who are obliged to do battle in their own defence. That this latter party (if I must so name them) are on the *increase*, is plain enough, so far as I can discern, to every man whose eyes are really open. That Unitarianism, divided against itself, and contending with

more asperity in this *felo de se* contest than with Trinitarians, is likely to be rather on the wane, is somewhat probable. I think the fact will scarcely be denied.

The young people of Boston and its vicinity in general, evidently have less zeal about supporting and propagating Unitarian sentiments than their fathers had. If any one should reply and say, that this is because they have less zeal for religion in any shape than their fathers had; I do not feel authorized to deny the truth of this allegation. I must also say, that in my apprehension, this is one of the genuine fruits of Unitarianism. A religion, the prominent feature of which is NOT TO BELIEVE, can never deeply interest any community, for any great length of time. The human soul, made sooner or later deeply to feel its sins, and wants, and woes, pants for something more than a *not believing* religion to rest upon, and will have it if it be attainable.

In Germany, since the first edition of these Letters was published, the work of boasted philosophy and reason has been going on, until it seems at last to have reached its *ne plus ultra*. First came Semler and Eichhorn's *accommodation* scheme. Next followed Paulus and others with the plan of explaining everything by mere natural causes, allowing at the same time a spice of superstition and ignorance in the writers of the Scriptures. Then came De Wette and his friends, with honest maxims of interpretation, but renouncing all idea of inspiration in the Bible, and maintaining that it abounds in mistakes and errors. Next came Strauss, with his scheme of mere *moral romance*. The Jesus of the Gospels is altogether a personage of romance, an exhibition and symbol of singular piety and virtue, as conceived of by the mind of the *romancers*. The numberless discrepancies and errors of the writers of the New Testament show, as this party aver, that the book is no *authentic* account either of facts or of doctrines. Last of all comes Bruno Bauer, with the downright charge of fraud and imposition on the part of the evangelists and apostles. What step lies beyond this, it is difficult to see.

Philosophy, however, has rather outstripped even Bauer himself. God, (in the view of what is now called *the philosophy* by way of eminence), is not a *personal conscious* being. He is only the unknown, unthinking, unfeeling *anima mundi*, and is indebted for his *personality* and his *consciousness* to *men*. Not only is it true that "we *are God and God is we*," but we are altogether the most conspicuous and important part of the Godhead, inasmuch as he has not consciousness at all without us. And as to *sin*—

how can God sin against himself? The decantated maxim of the party is: "If the world were not world, God would not be God."

Thus *ends* (shall I say?) this recent lesson. I cannot call it the first lesson, nor the only one. But is it at an *end?* For us poor starvelings of this western world, as to the richer feasts of philosophy, it might seem that this is as far as men can go. But no. The German mind is capable of still further advances; and I predict that ten years will see Hegelism melting away, and the market supplied with ware of a new pattern.

But enough. A false prophet I was not, as it seems from the present state of *facts*, when I penned those remarks in my Letters, twenty-six years ago, to which the present postscript has relation. But I take to myself no great credit for sagacity, in having written them. The truth is, that these things are everywhere so connected on the pages of ecclesiastical history, that one must be a dull reader not to know, that certain causes will produce certain effects, in respect to a great variety of matters. Even more than I predicted has taken place; and more is yet to come. The vantage ground which Mr. Parker has, in respect to his supposed frankness and sincerity, bids fair, perhaps, to strengthen him from the ranks of his more timid and shrinking brethren. Beyond Mr. Parker's position, we in this country, as I am inclined to think, cannot well go. It needs a *German* mind and education to do this. But when the mass of the Unitarian party shall be led to occupy his ground, (which can hardly fail to take place), we shall then know where we are; and if we must take the field of contest, we shall know at least what fashion of armour we are to cope with, who our opponents are, and what kind of defensive or assailing weapons may be expedient on our part.

Since completing my preparations for the present edition of these Letters, originally addressed to Dr. Channing, a friend has put into my hands a *new work*, which, as he informs me, is very popular among the Unitarians, and is circulated, even in remoter parts of our country, with no little zeal and assiduity. From a very natural curiosity, and from the interest which I feel in the subject, I have run my eye through the pages of this work; and it might argue some want of comity in me, if I should pass it without at least a brief notice.

I must confess, that when my eye met, on the title page, the

name of the author, which openly proclaimed that a *female* had ventured into the thorny path of theological controversy, I was filled with a variety of conflicting emotions. An extraordinary woman, I thought, she must be, in some respect or other, thus to venture, clad in masculine armour, upon tilt and tournament, on a field where none but those trained to the use of arms are wont to appear. It was the first time, within the compass of my reading, that I had ever met with such an occurrence. If the author of Ecclesiastes had lived until the present time, would he not have had occasion to review his now ancient (if not antiquated) adage: There is nothing new under the sun?

But it is one thing to wonder that a lady-combatant should enter the lists, and another thing to meet her in contest, and disarm her, or convince her that retreat is her safest course. For myself, I have always been accustomed to think, that a man could not contend with a woman, at any rate before the public eye, without coming off *second best*, let his cause be ever so good in itself. There is such a general sympathy for a female under such circumstances, that if her antagonist should get the victory in combat, he must do it at the expense, at least in part, of his good name as to chivalry and courtesy. And who would like to be reckoned among those that deserve a censure of this sort?

And yet, (for I must speak of serious matters in a graver manner), when ladies think it meet to take upon them the costume and the armour of the other sex, and present themselves on the arena for combat, I am not sure that it is the duty of every man to give up what he deems a good cause, rather than to tarnish the lustre of his chivalry a little. If I ken Mrs. Dana aright, she would deem it quite a piece of neglect, on my part, not to meet her on the new ground that she has taken, just as I would meet one who had been trained for combat. She would be far from taking it amiss, if I should feel that there is as much need of putting forth the best of my strength, in order to maintain my ground, as there would be in case the attack had been made by more experienced polemics.

I am heartily sorry, that the heroine before us is undergoing such a martyrdom as she everywhere complains of. "The days of proscription," says she, "of slander, insult, and neglect, have by no means passed away. Cold greetings, averted looks, long and intimate friendships sundered in a moment, tell a mournful tale in respect to the toleration *really* exercised in this country, so proud of its civil and religious liberty, towards those who have conscientiously changed their opinions;" Introd. p. iii.

She then goes on to speak of "injurious suspicions," of "direct charges which would almost break the heart of the sufferer, if he did not feel himself above their reach," and the like. This last circumstance is well thrown in; for that she feels herself above the reach of all her Trinitarian friends, lies upon the face of her whole book, from beginning to end, and is indeed one of its most prominent characteristics. That a *lady* should be subjected to "proscription, slander, insult, and neglect," was indeed, at first view, somewhat adapted to excite commiseration in every breast not hardened against the emotions of chivalry and courtesy. But while my commiseration was beginning to be somewhat excited by reading such an account of persecutors' deeds, and the breeze of compassion began to spring up and waft along my little barque which had spread sail to catch its influence, I was taken, as the seamen say, "all aback," after making but a short run. The lady has found for herself, without the aid of sympathizers, an adequate remedy, as it would seem, for all her woes. In the very next paragraph she tells us the secret of it: "When I look around me, and observe how the great majority of mankind are *blindly* following the lead of others, how few there are who think for themselves, how few are willing to test their religious opinions by comparing them with other systems of faith, by bringing them all "to the law and to the testimony" of God's inspired word . . . when these things meet my view, though I may be *distressed* at the exhibition of intolerance, I ought not, perhaps, to be *surprised* at the spirit which is manifested." p. iv.

It is indeed a most comforting sensation, to feel one's self to be "faithful found among the faithless." The great majority are "*blindly* [the Italics are my own] following the lead of others!" Whom then are those others following, who lead the majority? We cannot escape the conclusion, that they must be "blind leaders of the blind." At any rate Mrs. D. would fain put them both in the ditch, if they should fail to get there by virtue of their own wanderings.

The modesty and delicacy of these imputations on the great mass of Christians in our country, from a young woman who makes her appearance in the costume of the other sex, is not for me to descant upon. These are matters to be *felt*, rather than talked about. But however this may be, the gale of compassion that indicated a favourable approach to the harbour of sympathy, was dissipated by this adverse blast; and I soon brought myself to a state of great composure, in regard to the

martyrdom of this singularly independent woman, who, if we are to credit her own account, is almost the only one in all the ranks of such as have professed to be orthodox, that dares to venture on a course of free and independent thought and opinion.

The whole work is somewhat strongly marked with the characteristics developed in the Introduction. Never did lady-knight before meet with so many and such ungallant and unmerciful adversaries. However, not at all daunted, in right good earnest she does them battle. Still, there are times, when, as it would seem, she rather overrates the bloodthirstiness of her opponents; for when, as I am inclined to suppose, they mean at most only to commit some petty offence, such as Pope has held up to long remembrance in his Rape of the Lock, she seems to feel, that in the true Turkish style they mean to cut off the head rather than the lock.

All this, which is spread over the book in great profusion, is quite intelligible. This lady is the only candid and independent investigator and thinker, in all the circle where she formerly moved. Nor is this all. Her sympathies, her convictions, her wrongs, her prospects, her hopes, her comforts—these united form the central nodus about which all the smaller planets move—or, as she thinks, ought to move. The best opinion I have been able to form of this whole affair is, that it began, and has thus far continued—I do not say, will *end*—in *sentimentality*. A spirit, kindred to that of music and song, is its substratum; and the same taste which leads to devotion in a high degree to these, leads on to the *exquisite* and the *sentimental*, on every occasion where these can be displayed.

With all becoming deference to the assurances of this lady, that she never consulted Unitarians, or read any of their books, before she was already a convert to their doctrines, I have still some difficulties. How comes she, all at once, to have travelled over such a widely extended field of reading, the moment she begins to correspond with her friends? Her quotations and references would seem to betray years of hard study, pursued in all directions. For myself, I have been obliged to plod my way slowly along, and even to reach a "viginti annorum lucubrationes," before I could venture on reference to such a widely extended circle of reading. I can form no conception, therefore, of a young woman, more attentive, if report speaks truly, to accomplishments than to grave studies, traversing such a field in a few weeks or months, with more than Jack the Giant-killer's speed. It is a *phenomenon*. But it is not an incomprehensible

one. 'Others have laboured, and she has entered into their labours.'

'But what of all this?' I hear her and her friends exclaim. What is this to the purpose of refuting her book? Nothing at all I confess, as to one meaning which this question may have; but as to another meaning that some may give it, it is not wandering far from the main point. I might reply, with some show of reason, that all this avails just as much to the refutation of her book, as her complaints of persecution and parade of sentimentality contribute to the making of it, and to the commending of it to the notice of sentimental ladies, and to the *exquisites* of the other sex. She has evidently counted much on this; and so, as it strikes me, have her new friends reckoned, who have encouraged her to publish it. And in fact, I am myself doubtful, whether this will not prove to be the most taking feature of the book. If so, it is not amiss to submit this feature fairly to inspection. This is the sum and substance of what I have to say, in respect to the point now before us.

For the rest, I have little indeed to say of the book in general. I have gone through the whole of it, Appendix and all, without finding one new idea, or one trace of not being *led*, (after all the professions of *independent* thinking), by others who had travelled the same road before. How could it be otherwise? Here is a lady, whose life seems to have been mainly devoted to other very different things, who enters the field of metaphysical, philological, theological, scriptural, and patristical controversy, about the *doctrine of the Trinity*. What! Has she then been diving into all these depths, or ascending these lofty heights? Believe it who may; but I find not a trace of anything like argument in her book, which has not been said many and many a time before; and equally often, as I believe, refuted. It would be merely an *agere actum* to undertake a formal examination of her work. I could wish to say no more than I have already said in the preceding pages, on scarcely a single text or topic. She professes to be quite open to future conviction of error, if any one will adduce good arguments for this purpose. She doubtless means—good in her own estimation. I believe she may safely challenge the whole of "the lords of the creation" in mass, to produce such arguments. As to any champion who enters the lists with her, I venture to predict that he will surely come off without his *guerdon*.

It were easy to point out a goodly number of slips and errors in various statements, notwithstanding all the aid her new friends

have given her, (and this I trust is not a little), if the game were worth the hunting. I cannot think that it is. But lest she should complain of a disposition to bear hard upon her, to persecute, and to put her down more by sneering than by argument; and lest she should allege, that my assertions respecting this matter are mere random shots, intended mainly for effect, when in truth I was not able to point out anything of this nature in her work; I am compelled to give some specimens. And they are but mere specimens of a somewhat plentiful crop.

Some actual or imaginary correspondent of our author had, it seems, quoted 1 Tim. 3: 16, ("God manifest in the flesh") against her views. In reply she says: "You are perhaps aware . . . that Griesbach, whose authority is universally acknowledged by *Trinitarians* as well as others, has decided that the word *God*, in this passage, is not to be found in the best ancient manuscripts. . . . He expresses it: Great is the mystery of godliness; *He* who was manifest in the flesh, etc." She then goes on to cite from Sir Isaac Newton's famous (famous among Unitarians) History of two Corruptions of the Scriptures; the amount of which is, an assertion that 'all the churches for the first four or five hundred years, and all the ancient versions, and all the Greek and Latin writers, read: *Which* was manifested in the flesh, etc.'

I say nothing of the singular appeal to Griesbach, as an *authority* deciding that the word *God*, in the passage in question, is not to be found in the best ancient Mss. A simple matter of fact, like the one before us, viz. whether a Ms. reads *ΟΣ* or *ΘΣ* (*he who*, or *God*), is one on which others can decide as well as Griesbach; and Trinitarians are far enough from attributing to him such an authority in these matters, as Mrs. D. supposes. Then again the statement of Newton is almost *quot voces tot errores*. Instead of all antiquity agreeing to read *which* (ὅ), but a single Ms. (the Cod. Claromont.) is even supposed to exhibit it; and it is nearly certain that this supposition has no good ground. As to the ancient versions, such as the Itala, the Vulgate, the Peshito Syriac, the Ethiopic, Armenian, Coptic, Sahidic, and Arabic of Erpenius, only the Latin versions (which read *quod*) are certain as to the reading; all the rest, on thorough examination, turn out to be altogether doubtful witnesses. In the *Latin* fathers, in accordance with the Vulgate, we find *quod* (which); but in the genuine Greek fathers, not one can be found which exhibits it. So much for Sir Isaac's statement.

Then, as to Griesbach's "ὅς instead of *Θεός*," he can appeal

only to Codd. A. C. F. G. 17. 73. Of these, the first, in consequence of the faded ink, cannot be decided upon with any certainty. In respect to C., i. e. the *Codex Ephremi*, Tischendorf, in his recent republication of it, states as a matter beyond all doubt, that $\overline{\Theta\Sigma}$ now stands in the Codex, i. e. Θεός, *God*. But he seems to think, that the line across the Θ, and the line above, are from a *later* hand. *Conjectural* this must of course be. These are clear and certain marks, that the reading *God* now stands in the Ms. All the evidences of a different reading are derived solely from the alleged paleness of the ink in these marks. Weber, Woide, and Parquoi (*custos* of the Royal Library), all maintain the originality of $\overline{\Theta\Sigma}$ in the case in question. It seems to be incumbent on those who deny this, to show, in some way, *how* or *why* these alleged additions were made to the original copy. The mere colour of the ink cannot decide a point of this nature.

F. and G. are Mss. of the ninth or tenth centuries; 17. and 73. of the eleventh and twelfth. As to *Versions*, not one of all the ancient ones can be appealed to with any certainty to confirm Griesbach's reading. And as to the *fathers*, *qui* (ὅς) occurs once or twice in the *Latin* fathers, but *never* in any Greek one, in a direct quotation. Griesbach and Lachmann, moreover, are the only critical editors of any note, that have admitted this reading into the text.

As to the reading $\overline{\Theta\Sigma}$ (Θεός, *God*), some time ago 171 Mss. of the Pauline epistles, among which are some of the oldest, were known to exhibit it. The number has recently been much increased. The Philoxenian Syriac, the Arabic Polyg., the Slavonic, and Georgian versions, all exhibit it. The Greek fathers, Ignatius, Hippolytus, Dionysius Alex., Athanasius, Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret, Euthalius, (most of them certainly, all of them probably), exhibit it. The evidence in favour of it is altogether predominant, and nearly overwhelming.

So much for Newton's *Corruptions* of Scripture; and so much for what can be said by one, in a state of all but entire ignorance with regard to the true position of such a critical matter at the present period. But then—Newton had given an opinion that helped a little to remove obstacles in the way of our author's opinion; and the help of such a great name was very grateful. But if Sir Isaac had done nothing beyond writing his *Two Corruptions* and his work on *Prophecy*, to emblazon his name, it would have needed, by this time, a larger magnifying glass than

he invented, to find out in what part of the firmament he was. Voltaire says, that he wrote his work on *Prophecy* to avenge the world for having written his *Principia*. "Non omnia possumus omnes."

In a *tirade* against the spirit of Calvinism, and the Synod of Dort, (p. 165 seq.), Mrs. D. says, that "the spirit of persecution sent *Benevelt* to the scaffold." I suppose she means the famous *Olden Barneveldt*. If so, is the statement correct? I had ever supposed that Prince Maurice persecuted and finally beheaded Barneveldt, altogether on grounds of *political* jealousy and envy, alleging against him an attempt to deliver the country to the Spaniards. The most that could be said seems to be, that he accused Barneveldt, among other things, of favouring the Arminian party; but all this was a mere feint, in order to render him odious to the high orthodox party. However, in our author's opinion, this all goes to making out a charge against '*Orthodoxy*,' and helps to swell the catalogue of its enormities.

These may serve as specimens of what those can do, who meddle with matters, even of fact, that they do not understand. As a specimen of criticism which our author repeats the thousandth time, after Socinus and others, the remarks on John 8: 58 may answer our present purpose. Jesus says to the Jews: *πρὶν Ἀβραὰμ γενέσθαι, ἐγώ εἰμι*, i. e. *before Abraham was, I am.* Our fair critic stoutly maintains, that it should be translated: "Before Abraham was, I am *he*;" and she belabours in earnest "king James' translators" for not so translating here, when elsewhere they had rendered *ἐγώ εἰμι* by *I am he*. And what if they had so done? Why then the sense of the passage would have been, according to Wakefield and our critic: "My mission was settled and certain before the birth of Abraham." But then, in the first place, what is there that was not equally settled and certain at the same period, in the view of the omniscient God? Secondly, what was the point in dispute between Jesus and the Jews? Was it in respect to the *time* when his mission was decreed? Not a word of this in the narrative of John. What then? Why the Jews had just said to Jesus: "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" Jesus replies: "Before Abraham was, I am." In other words: I exist, I did exist before Abraham. Such is the meaning of the Present tense, *εἰμί*, in the case before us; and such a meaning the Present tense often has; see in John 14: 9. 15: 27. Jer. 1: 5. Ps. 90: 2, and Winer's N. Test. Grammar, § 42. 2. c. Thirdly, the antithesis between *Abraham was* and *I am*, renders it impossible

to supply *he* after *am*, without losing the whole point and aim of the assertion. To supply it, and interpret it as our critic, following the suit of Socinus and Wakefield, does, necessarily brings us to this: 'Before Abraham's mission was decreed, mine was decreed!' which surely needs no further comment. De Wette, who is the Rev. Theodore Parker's favourite leader, and who, whatever else he may be, is a master critic of language, translates and comments thus: "*I am;* not *I am it* or *he.* . . . *That Jesus ascribes preëxistence to himself is certain;* see John 1: 1. 6: 62. 17: 5. . . . Not in a *nominal* sense, as the Socinians and Grotius understand it, so that merely the foreordination of Christ as the Messiah was the meaning of the phrase." Very justly might this well skilled critic say thus. The monstrosity of such an exegesis as Wakefield's, (I cannot say Mrs. D's.), stands out in high relief to the eye of every scholar who has gone beyond the rudiments of Greek.

But I do not mean to review Mrs. D.'s book, and therefore must withhold my hand. I have only two or three remarks to make, and then I shall dismiss the matter.

Mrs. D. has one Letter inscribed: An Overflow of Feeling; another, Mental Suffering; and so, in one way and another, we are continually meeting with her *sentimentalities.* Her new friends and herself, it would seem, are overflowing with the milk of human kindness. The arms of their charity are stretched out so wide, that Arians, Socinians, Arminians, Universalists, and the like, may all find a place, and a somewhat warm embrace therein. But how is it with the Orthodox, the Calvinists, the bigots, the predestinarians, and the like? Does this overflow of charity, and good will, and gentle feeling, bring them within its reach and influence? Let us see: "I regard it [Calvinism] as I would some venomous serpent, from whose fangs I have narrowly escaped. Too long has it been coiling itself around my struggling spirit. That its poisonous fangs have not reached my vitals, I owe to that wonderful Providence of God which has protected me from harm, and at length, provided a way of escape. He has given me strength to struggle on, till, at length, I have thrown the monster from me. I bless God for my escape."—p. 131.

The musical world may perhaps reap some advantage from this; for they may naturally expect, that the next edition of the *Harp* will contain an additional and highly spirited *Te Deum laudamus*, inspired and called forth by such an important rescue. More gentle seem to have been her struggles, against the

captivating addresses of Unitarianism. What surprises one most is, that the "venomous Calvinism" did not sooner take the hint, from the repulsive struggles of the lady against him, and quit urging a suit which he could not fail to see was desperate. Less surprised we are, that Unitarianism, with his well-dressed person, and bland looks, and genteel demeanor, should win his way to the lady's heart, and find her "nothing loath."

In another place (p. 133), she says, that "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are!" is the "legitimate result of Calvinism;" that "all rigid Calvinists are exceedingly exclusive in their creed, if not in their natural feelings;" and that she "has endured the tyranny of this faith too long not to dislike it now." Shortly after she breaks forth into rapture: "I thank God that *I am free.*" [This looks, however, a little like thanking God that she is not as other men, i. e. the poor Calvinists, are, viz. *slaves*]. But again: "I breathe the air of religious liberty, and it revives my soul. I raise my unshackled hands in gratitude to Heaven, and sing aloud for joy." So! And yet it is generally believed, that she had been wont to sing somewhat in former days, and even aloud, during the period when the giant Calvinism held her immured in his iron castle. But then, the present song, as we must understand the matter, is still louder. And why not? "My eyes," exclaims she, "are now opened to behold the truth, beauty, and symmetry of another faith." It may be so, I will not deny; but then, all is not gold which glistens to our view; and I have sometimes heard of 'optics even so sharp, as to see what is not to be seen.'

How is it now, that this same tender-hearted lady, who recoils from the 'venomous serpent,' and pronounces all to be *slaves*, who sympathize in sentiment with Calvin, zealously rebukes Calvin for merely saying that he *detests* the sentiments of those, who maintain that our free-will is such, in our natural condition, that we may prepare ourselves to receive the grace of God? p. 118. Pres. Edwards comes in, too, for a full share of her denunciations.

But enough of this. It is all quite tolerable, compared with this lady's assertion in other places, that Unitarianism is *unjustly* charged with denying the atonement, regeneration, and the Holy Spirit, p. 270. On p. 71 seq., she has a long extract from Dr. Dewey (of N. York), in which he asserts, that Unitarians believe "in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; in the atonement, as a *sacrifice*, a *propitiation;* in human depravity; in regeneration; in the doctrine of election; and in a future state of rewards and

punishments." On the part of such a man as Dr. Dewey, I can call this nothing but gross deception. He knows well, although this lady-champion does not, that there is not a single one of these doctrines, according to the usual sense attached to them by all theologians of any name, which Unitarians admit, and which indeed they do not violently oppose. The artifice of Dr. Dewey consists in employing an entire new set of definitions. He believes in such a *name*, provided that name is defined agreeably to his notion of things. It is exactly a case of the same nature as would have been presented by a Philistine votary of the god of Ekron, who went up to Jerusalem, and offered himself as a worshipper in the temple of Jehovah. The Jews repelled him, because he was an idolater. He claimed fellowship, however, as standing on the same ground with them. They believed in one God; *so did he.* There was no other difference between them, than that of the *definition of words;* and who could be so senseless as to engage in the idle task of *logomachy?* Were the Jews now to be taken in with such hypocritical and delusive pretences as these? 'No'—they would have said, 'you believe indeed in *one god;* but he is the god of Ekron, and a mere block of wood. The God in whom we believe is a Spirit, and the Maker of heaven and earth.' Just such a difference there is between Dr. Dewey's orthodoxly named doctrines, and the real matter of his belief compared with that of the Orthodox. His are a body without a soul—the cold and lifeless statue at Ekron, compared with the living and eternal Creator. The worst of the case is, that he knows this to be so, and yet holds out these lures before the public. And the Orthodox, forsooth, are *bigots* and *logomachists*, because they will not allow him the latitude of defining as he pleases, until he defines away every distinctive attribute which marks the doctrines in question. It is an unworthy—a degrading artifice, to practise thus upon the credulity or the ignorance of his uninstructed hearers or readers. It merits, (what it will be certain sooner or later to receive), the scorn of every upright and honest mind.

With the lady I would deal more gently. She is plainly an offender from want of adequate knowledge. Less confidence would indeed become her in such a condition; but she does not appear to be embarrassed by any troubles arising from diffidence.

Mrs. Dana, who has laid before the world so circumstantial and protracted an account of her trials and sufferings from bigots and bigotry, does not quit the stage without letting us know

the issue of all this discipline. "Thanks be unto God," says she, "I am enjoying a new life. While my friends are mourning over me, I am rejoicing with a calm and holy joy, which has spread itself to the inmost recesses of my soul." And a little further on she assures us, that 'her *heaven* has already begun, in the way of anticipation.'

Now all this is quite *sentimental*. The book begins, continues, and ends, in a strain of entire consistency, so far as this matter is concerned.

But I am exceeding the bounds allotted me; and long since have doubtless lost all credit with this writer and her friends, for courtesy and kind feeling toward a new and young adventurer on the field of theology. I shall not improbably be ranked among denouncing bigots; nor is it at all unlikely, that I shall be accused as wanting even in the *humane* toward the gentler part of the creation, both by Mrs. D. and her new friends. I am very sorry to lie under such an imputation; but I really do not know how to help it. If the young adventurer had no such feeling of modesty and diffidence as would make her refrain from so bold an attack on all Trinitarians, I cannot feel myself altogether guilty of a *betise*, because I defend a sacred enclosure against what I look upon in the light of a profanation. Comity itself must needs have some bounds. Truth must not be sacrificed to mere urbanity. I say this calmly and deliberately, in view of all the outcry that can be made among sentimentalists and exquisites. There are more serious duties to be done by a Christian minister, than to listen to any voice of persuasion that doctrines respecting the Godhead may be compromised by any of the usages of etiquette. I have no other apology, therefore, to make to Mrs. D. or to her new friends, than that I think the truths assailed to be too sacred to be passed by in silence. To her and her advisers in the matter of this publication, if they will tolerate it in this land of freedom, I would even venture to suggest for their consideration, the sentiment of one of the shrewdest observers of human nature which the heathen world ever produced—*Ne sutor ultra crepidam.* If this advice should be spurned, I would with all diffidence recommend a careful examination of 1 Tim. 2: 12.

I have done with Mrs. D. and her book. But the subjects presented, and the attitude in which some of them are placed, as well as the reasoning grounded upon this, seem to call for a few remarks. I engage that they shall be brief.

Dr. Channing maintains, with much earnestness, the *separate*

personality and *inferiority* of the Son of God. But if he has anywhere declared himself *explicitly*, in respect to the actual rank which Christ holds and the constitution of his person, I have not yet met with the passage. Whether he was Arian or Socinian, in his speculative views, I must confess myself unable satisfactorily to determine. Many things which he says of Christ look much like high Arianism, and he seems to lean to the views of Dr. Samuel Clarke. But whether he actually regarded Christ as created before the world was made, specially whether he did this in the latter part of his life, is not known to me. On the other hand, Socinus and his contemporaries and fellow labourers often speak in exalted terms of the Saviour, and hesitate not to declare that *worship* is due to him; but still only a *secondary* worship, such as we may pay to a most exalted character after an apotheosis. If Mrs. D., in sketching her own views, has also given a faithful portrait of the opinions of her confidential advisers, then are they more explicit than Dr. Channing. No names are too high for Christ. He is *Lord of all* and *God over all*, and the object of worship and praise; yet all in subordination to one, who, with the same names, is the only and absolute Supreme, and is alone entitled to our highest spiritual homage and worship. She does not even once appear to feel the immeasurable distance there is, between these high Arian notions and the simple Humanitarianism of Priestley, and of a large portion of the Unitarians in England and this country. That Christ was a *mere man*, when once assumed, leads naturally enough to the inquiry: Whether he was the Son of Mary by a miraculous birth, or the Son of Joseph and Mary according to the ordinary course of things. Those who distrust and impugn all miraculous events, of course deny his miraculous birth, and attribute his *paternity* to Joseph. Of this party, if I rightly understand the matter, there are not a few, among Unitarians of the present day.

To Dr. Channing's admirers and friends in respect to religious sentiment, as well as to all gradations of *Humanitarians*, I ask liberty here to put a few questions.

The doctrine of the Trinity is rejected and spurned at mainly for two reasons. 'First, three cannot be one, nor one three, because it is impossible in the nature of things, inasmuch as the proposition presents us with a downright contradiction. Secondly, admitting the possibility of a threefold distinction in the Godhead, the whole matter respecting Christ is covered with impenetrable darkness and wrapped in mystery. The Bible ex-

hibits Christ as a *man*, really and truly a *man;* and to say, that *God and man are united in one person*, is affirming a thing both mysterious and impossible. The *unity* of God, moreover, is virtually denied by such a supposition.

Many aspects of these allegations have already been examined. I touch here only on what needs, perhaps, a fuller development.

I have often thought it very strange, that Unitarians of the *Arian* cast, who complain everywhere of Trinitarians for introducing so much of the *mysterious* and *unintelligible* into their creed, never seem once to entertain the suspicion that they are fully exposed to the same charge, even in a still higher degree. If there is any one thing that lies on the very face of all the N. Testament, Gospels and Epistles and Apocalypse, it is that Christ was really and truly *man*. If the reader has a moment's doubt, I must refer him to pp. 54, 153 above. Indeed this is what all Unitarians of the present day are in the constant habit of affirming, particularly when they wish to expose, what they name the absurdity of Trinitarians, in maintaining that he is truly God.

Let us take them now at their own word. Christ was a *man*. But what is a *man?* A *human* body and a *human* soul constitute the being to whom we give this appellation. Let Dr. C., then, and all his friends and followers, choose between the horns of the dilemma, on which their assertions place them. 'Christ existed before the world was;' for so of course the *Arians* must speak. 'He created the world; he is the object of worship and homage, next to the Father.' Very well. But then, when "the Logos became flesh and dwelt among us," how did he unite with the person of Jesus, so as constitute a being *truly man?* The old Arian theory was, that he became the *soul* of the man Jesus. For argument's sake I will concede this, at present. But then I must be allowed of course to make some inquiries here. If the *Logos* became the *soul* of Jesus, then in what respect was Jesus really and truly a *man?* A man is made up of a material body and a reasonable *human* soul. I have always been accustomed to suppose, moreover, that the *soul* is, in a high and altogether preëminent sense, the very essence of man or human nature. The *body* is only the costume; the soul is the person. To talk then of Christ's being a *man*, and on this ground to deny that he can have a divine nature, and yet to represent him as having no human soul, but only as being inhabited by the Logos—is this steering clear of *mystery* and even absurdity?

Such is one horn of the dilemma. The other is equally prominent and sharp. A *composite* person, God and man, is said by Unitarians to be an absurdity. But if so, how is this at all removed by uniting in the person of Jesus the *Logos-nature* and the *fleshly nature*? I say *fleshly*, for I cannot of course speak of *human* nature, when a human soul is denied to Jesus. Here then Arianism itself brings forward and commends to our faith, a Saviour who is neither human nor divine, neither of the angelic order nor of that of the sons of men. What else is this, but to bid us believe in *two natures and one person*? Yea, we are called on to admit, that there are two *created* natures united in one and the same person. This is the other horn of the dilemma.

For my own part, I can much easier believe it to be possible and probable, that the Godhead should, in some mysterious way, unite man who is formed in its own image with itself, than believe that two distinct created beings should form one person. For there, the mind finds some relief from the consideration, that "all things are possible with God."

And how is Arianism to rid itself of this dilemma? In no way whatever, unless it can invent a method of entirely explaining away, either the human nature, or the higher nature of the Logos.

What does it signify, now, for combatants to rush into this contest about the *person* of Christ, without once stopping to ask, into what difficulties their own sentiments lead them? Truly, among all the theories about the person of Christ, which have troubled the church, I think none is more forbidding, more mysterious, more entirely destitute of any tolerable support from reason or Scripture, than Arianism.

The *Humanitarians* get rid of the difficulties of *two* natures in one person. But other difficulties occur. What becomes of the evangelical narrations, which aver that Jesus was born of a *virgin*? If admitted, then there is at least something of *mystery* about the matter. An *extraordinary* man of course he must be. If his *miraculous* birth is denied, then of course the Gospels are put on the same shelf with Robinson Crusoe and the Tales of my Landlord. Mr. Parker's positions, in the book *Of Religion*, are of course virtually adopted. But is there no difficulty and no *mystery* here? This same Christ is said to have been "in the beginning with God;" it is said of him, that he "was God;" that "he made all things;" that "the worlds were created by him;" that he "existed before Abraham;" that he "came out

from the Father, and was about to return to the place from whence he came;" that he "had glory with the Father before the world was;"—and yet he is declared by Humanitarians to be merely and only a *man*. Is there no difficulty and no mystery here? Nay, I may urge this matter still further. Is there any alternative for a truly frank and honest mind here, but that of rejecting the authority of the New Testament, or of giving up the doctrine of simple humanity? All attempts to do away the plain, direct, and simple assertions of these and the like passages, are, and must forever be, unavailing with a straightforward and thoroughly upright mind. The only consistent course in respect to the matter is, to deny the authority of the New Testament writings.

The often asserted *impossibility of a union of two natures in one person*, may gather credit, but not strength, by its repetition. It does not strike my mind as an *impossibility*. Are we not ourselves examples of *two natures* in *one person*? Even of two natures the opposite of each other—*matter* and *spirit*. But does this hinder our being one person? Yea, I might (with Paul and the ancients) appeal to the well known *trichotomy*, or division into three natures, "body, soul, and spirit." That is, we are made up of a material body, of animal and sensitive life, and of an immortal spirit. Here then are *three in one*. Why now do not the wonder-haters stand aghast at this, and deny the *possibility* of it? Because they are aware that the common sense and feelings of men could not be made to side with them in so doing. But when we assert our belief in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as united in one God, they accuse us of mysticism, of credulity, and even of downright absurdity. In vain do we declare, that we do not take the word *person* in its common sense as applied to men; in vain do we assert our belief in the *unity* of God, even the *numerical* unity and sameness of substance; in vain do we say, that we make no pretences of being able to define or describe the exact nature of the distinctions in the Godhead; in vain do we declare, that whatever those distinctions are, they do not and cannot interfere with *unity*. We are still met with the old objection endlessly repeated: "Three are not one, and one is not three." Self-evident, we readily confess this proposition to be, when understood as having relation to the same thing in the same respect. But do we ever assert that *three persons are one person*? Never. We merely affirm that the *Godhead*, which is *one* Godhead, consists of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Is this a contradiction or absurdity? It has not yet been shown to be such. I think it cannot be. When our opponents shall prove it

to be an absurdity, that three natures should constitute one human person, we will review our positions.

Let me not be understood to say, or hint, that the distinctions in the Godhead are on a par with these, as to the *manner* of them. This cannot be so, from the very nature of an uncreated Being. But the possibility of a union in one Godhead, of distinctions which in some respects may be separately considered, is not a thing than can be disproved. Reason knows nothing of this matter, indeed. Philosophy like that of Schelling and Hegel has failed to demonstrate such a union. It rests on the credit of revelation. He who denies this, may deny that. But to show that the Scriptures have made no such revelation, when interpreted in a fair and impartial manner, I must believe to be utterly impossible.

Of what use is it, now, to assume positions in respect to the doctrine of the Trinity, which no enlightened Trinitarian holds, and then to reject this doctrine because of the absurdity of those positions? Yet I cannot take up a Unitarian book on this subject, where this is not virtually done.

One word more, on the perpetually decantated *unity* of the Godhead. All Unitarians profess an unusual attachment to this article of their Creed, and they seem to consider the whole matter as so plain and simple, that it scarcely needs the slightest effort to comprehend it. But is this really so? The matter is sufficiently important to seek for an explicit and intelligible answer to this question.

When they say, then, that *God is one*, do they mean to assert that his essence, or the constituent elements of his being, is of one simple homogeneous substance? In other words, do they mean that his ontological essence consists of only one element? I take it for granted that no intelligent man among them will contend for this; first, because we know nothing at all what that is which constitutes such essence; and secondly, because, even if we possessed some knowledge of this nature, no one could determine such a question as that before us, without having made an analysis of the element or elements in question. It is almost presumption even to speak of such a thing.

Then, moreover, all the objects with which we are acquainted, present *unities*, without these objects being made up of simple homogeneous elements. A tree is *one*, a plant is *one*, a mountain is *one*, a country is *one*, a man is *one*, and so of the rest, without any simplicity and homogeneousness of constituent parts. The *unity*, in all these cases, consists in something en-

tirely distinct from the constituent ontological elements; for these are mixed and diverse. The *oneness* of the Godhead does not, cannot (as viewed by us) consist of mere simplicity and identity of constituent essential elements; for in predicating *unity* we do not fix our minds at all on considerations of this nature.

In what then does this *unity* positively and absolutely consist? A positive definition of it, i. e. an affirmative definition, I believe no Unitarian can well give, however familiar he may be with the use of this terminology. We may say *negatively*, that there is but one God, or there is one God and no more, and the like; yet all of this makes no approach to an affirmative definition. Unity, moreover, cannot consist in *sameness* or *μονοσια* (I can find no adequate English word) of *attribute;* for the Godhead has many attributes. It cannot consist in oneness of *action;* for there is a great variety of this, e. g. creating, sustaining, governing, rewarding, punishing, etc.

If now we push this inquiry to its utmost bounds, we shall be obliged, at last, to fall back upon our own consciousness of *oneness* or *identity* of soul, in all the various stages of our existence. Our consciousness of identity is our highest evidence of oneness in our souls, or in our persons, (persons in the metaphysical sense). What we are conscious of in ourselves, as constituting our essential *I* or *Egoismus*, we apply to the Godhead, when we assert its unity. We mean that there is the same identical Spirit or Mind, which thinks and acts at all times and in all places. Whatever may be the essential or ontological constituents or elements of this Spirit or Mind, they have been, are, and will continue to be, identically the same, and of course the same Mind or Agent will continue to exist. In such a sense we affirm that God is *one*. We tacitly refer, in such an assertion, to our own consciousness of oneness and identity in our spirits.

Now what is there in all this, which renders it impossible or absurd, that there should be *distinctions* in the Godhead? We say that it is "the same in substance;" that there are not two or more wills, two or more consciousnesses, etc.; not two or more distinct sets (so to speak) of essential attributes; and the like. But how does all this prove, that in the Godhead there are no distinctions, which, by the manner of their development, have given rise to the names Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; I, Thou, He; and the like? Imperfection of language obliges us to express these distinctions in such a way. Who can venture to assert, that there are not *modifications* of the divine Being

which give rise to all this, and which do not at all interfere with its essential Unity? It would be even metaphysically and philosophically presumptuous, to say that there are not, and cannot be, such distinctions or modifications. I readily grant that we cannot prove them by the aid of mere natural theology. But I am equally certain, that we *cannot disprove* them. The whole matter must be referred to *revelation*. And if such a fact or doctrine is revealed, no man can show that it is stamped with any absurdity or contradiction of the divine Unity. Of course he cannot show, that we are bound to reject such a doctrine on this ground.

Why then should a triumphant air be so often assumed by Unitarian writers, as if they were the only men in the world sufficiently rational to vindicate the divine Unity? Why should they so often claim to be the only advocates of a consistent and rational view of the nature of the Godhead? I deny the justice of such claims. I deny the right to charge us with believing in *three* Gods, or with maintaining what is in itself absurd or impossible. It is easy, I well know, to talk largely and loudly of the divine *unity*. But it is not so easy to define what one really means by it. It is still harder to show, that unity is at all incompatible with the distinctions of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, when these are understood in the scriptural sense.

I scarcely need to suggest, that probably neither Mrs. D., nor thousands of others who have the words *one God* so constantly in their mouths, ever bestowed one serious hour of reflection on the inquiry: What idea does this language exactly convey? And when we get to the *ne plus ultra* of our inquiries, we find nothing that can show us in any degree, that the doctrine of the Trinity involves either an impossibility or an absurdity.

We say respecting ourselves, that the *understanding* perceives and comprehends, that the *will* decides, that *reason* ponders and compares and deduces, and the like. That is, we often assign distinct and diverse attributes to the soul or mind, and speak of them as distinct agents, doing different things and active in a variety of ways. But in the language of sound and well arranged philosophy we also say: The *soul* comprehends, decides, ponders, compares, concludes, and the like. Will any one venture to call the propriety of either of these methods of expression in question? I trust not. If this be allowed, on all hands, is there not something to be learned from it, in respect to the subject before us? Why may we not say, that the Father does this, the Son does that, and the Holy Spirit does another and different thing, and

yet say, with perfect truth, and correctness that *God* does each of these things? Some of the ancients held man to be a *microcosm*, that is a compressed similitude or resemblance of the whole world. Without appealing to this, we have better authority for saying, that "Man was made in the image of God." Our mind or spirit performs acts so diverse, and is *constitutionally* and *essentially* so fitted to perform such acts, that we name its several faculties as agents in and by themselves, when we speak of those acts which are appropriate to each; and yet we do not once think of doing any violence by all this to the doctrine of our own *unity*. Why now can it not be true of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that there is a foundation in the essential nature of the Godhead, for the diversity of acts attributed to each of them, while one and the same God is "in all, and over all, and through all?" I do not say—I must not be understood as meaning to aver, that any comparison drawn from *created* beings is fully adequate to explain the nature of an uncreated and eternal Being. The thing is impossible. But I may say, that since man is made in the image of God, we may help to remove difficulties that lie in our way in regard to our conceptions of the Trinity, by inviting attention to a like mystery in respect to ourselves. I may call, moreover, on all sober and reasoning Unitarians to consider, whether there is anything more absurd or contradictory, in saying that the Father does this, and the Son that, and the Spirit another thing, and also in saying that *God* does each of these things, than there is in saying, that the understanding does this, and the will that, and reason another thing, and yet that the *soul* does each and all of these. Is there a sound thinker in the land, who will venture to say, that this language in respect to the soul is not every day employed, and employed without any apprehension of creating difficulties in respect to the *unity* of the soul? Why should the like use of language, then, in regard to the Godhead, be viewed in such a light as to name it absurd and irrational? Truly the assertion of Unitarians, that Trinity is incompatible with Unity, and that distinctions in the Godhead are based upon impossibility and absurdity, are far—in my judgment very far—from having any solid foundation.

TWO DISCOURSES

ON

THE ATONEMENT.

[The two following Sermons on the *Atonement* were delivered in the Chapel of the Theol. Seminary in Andover, in the year 1824, when there seemed to be a special call for a discussion of the subject of which they treat. They were printed soon after delivery, by request of the Students and others; and they have, since that period, been several times reprinted, partly in large editions. For some time past there have been none for sale. The frequency of the inquiry for them, and the importance of the subject, are my apology for reprinting them at present, if an apology be necessary. My views in respect to the subject of the Sermons have not changed since that period, excepting that they have become more vivid and intensive. If there be a *central point* in the system of Christianity, around which all the rest of the system moves, I am satisfied that it is the doctrine of Atonement, or (in other words) the vicarious sufferings and death of Christ, in order that sinners may be pardoned and redeemed. The design of the two following discourses is to remove the leading objections to this doctrine, and to establish it on a scriptural basis. It would be easier, in some respects, to write a book on such a subject, than to compress what one has to say, within the limits of two short discourses. But then *brevity* has its advantages, in some cases; and I must leave more ample discussion to professed Theologians, whose proper business it is. Of course, no intelligent person can regard the discourses which follow, as anything more than a mere *outline* of the all-important subject under consideration.—M. S.]

May, 1846.

DISCOURSE I.

ISAIAH LIII. 5, 6.

HE WAS WOUNDED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS; HE WAS BRUISED FOR OUR INIQUITIES; THE CHASTISEMENT OF OUR PEACE WAS UPON HIM; AND BY HIS STRIPES ARE WE HEALED. ALL WE LIKE SHEEP HAVE GONE ASTRAY; WE HAVE TURNED EVERY ONE TO HIS OWN WAY; AND THE LORD HATH LAID ON HIM THE INIQUITY OF US ALL.

THE sentiment of this passage may perhaps be made more perspicuous, by a translation of it somewhat nearer to the spirit of the original.

"He was wounded on account of our transgressions; he was smitten on account of our iniquities; the chastisement by which our peace is procured was laid on him; and by his wounds are we healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have wandered each one in the path that he chose; and Jehovah hath laid on him the punishment due to us all."

This passage, no less than the august personage to whom it relates, has been to the Jews of ancient and modern times a stumbling block, and to many of the Gentiles foolishness. Very soon after Christians, when disputing with the Jews about Christ crucified, began to make their appeal to it, as proof that a suffering and atoning Saviour, Jesus of Nazareth, was foretold in the Hebrew Scriptures, the Jews set themselves to find out some other person, or some class of men, concerning whom the prophet might be regarded as here speaking. Some of them have maintained, that the prophet had reference to their nation at large; some that he had respect to Uzziah, Hezekiah, or Josiah; while others suppose, that Isaiah, Jeremiah, or some one of the prophets, was the subject of his description. Nor have commentators

and critics among Christians been wanting, who have advocated the opinions thus proposed by the Jews. Of late, the prevailing sentiment among the so-called neological class of critics is, that the *prophetic order* of men among the Hebrews, rather than any particular individual of it, is referred to by Isaiah. As the prophets, in ancient times, were often subjected to sufferings and death, by the persecuting spirit which reigned among their contemporaries; so they are supposed to be represented, in our text and context, as bearing the sins of the nation, and making atonement for them.

It is not my present design to enter into a particular examination of these discrepant and very unsatisfactory interpretations. To the *Jew* I would say: In what other part of the Old Testament are the sufferings of any mere king or prophet ever represented as *expiatory?* The Mosaic law has prescribed expiatory sacrifices; and has prescribed *all* that were to be offered under the ancient dispensation. What part of this law speaks of expiation by the sufferings and death of any mere king or prophet? Or if the Jewish nation at large be the subject of the prophet's description, where is this nation, when persecuted and suffering, represented as an expiatory sacrifice? And *for whom* did they make expiation? On the contrary, are they not always represented as bearing the punishment due to their *own* transgressions, and not as bearing that due to others?

To the commentator bearing the name of *Christian*, and disposed to follow these wanderings of unbelief and offence at the cross of Christ in which the Jews have so long indulged, I have only one brief remark to make; which is, that evangelists and apostles have told us, who is the subject of the prophet's description in our text and context. When the treasurer of the Ethiopian queen had been up to worship at Jerusalem, and was returning home, by an express direction from the Spirit of God Philip the evangelist met him. As Philip drew near, he heard the Ethiopian reading a portion of our chapter: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb before his shearers, so he opened not his

mouth. In his humiliation, his judgment was taken away; and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch said to Philip: Of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the *same* Scripture, and preached unto him JESUS." Acts 8: 26—35.

Peter has also applied a part of our chapter to the same distinguished Sufferer. "Christ suffered for us . . . his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree . . . by whose stripes we are healed; for ye were as sheep going astray." 1 Pet. 2: 21—25. The two last phrases are quotations from our text itself, and are certainly applied by the apostle directly to the Saviour.

I add only, that Jesus himself cites a part of the chapter from which our text is taken, as containing a description of his own sufferings: "I say unto you, that what is written must be accomplished in me: And he was reckoned among the transgressors." Luke 22: 37, comp. Is. 53: 12.

I feel no concern further to vindicate the application of the text to the person of the Messiah. The matter resolves itself into the simple question, whether the interpretation of evangelists and apostles is to be admitted, and believed to be correct; or whether our own conjecture or philosophical ratiocination is to be the ultimate authority, to which we must make our appeal.

From the language of our text, as applied to Christ, I deduce the proposition, that HE SUFFERED AS OUR SUBSTITUTE; or, that HIS SUFFERINGS AND DEATH WERE AN EXPIATORY OFFERING, ON ACCOUNT OF WHICH OUR SINS ARE PARDONED, AND WE ARE RESTORED TO THE DIVINE FAVOUR.

My present object is to discuss the doctrine of the atonement made by Christ, which this proposition brings to our view; and in doing this, I design,

I. To make some explanations necessary to a right understanding of the subject.

II. To prove the doctrine.

III. To answer some objections alleged against it.

According to the method proposed, I am, first, to make some explanations necessary to a right understanding of our subject.

In order to avoid all misapprehension of the design which I have in view, let me observe at the commencement of this discourse, that it is not my object to treat of the *obedience* of Christ, considered as having an influence upon our redemption, or in procuring salvation for us. I speak of obedience here, in the sense which many of the older divines mean to express, when they employ the phrase *active* obedience of Christ, in order to distinguish his positive fulfilment of the divine law from what they name his *passive* obedience, by which they mean his humiliation and sufferings. To pursue the inquiry, in what sense, or to what degree, the active obedience of Christ contributes to our redemption, would carry me too far from the specific object which I now have in view. I shall therefore dismiss this topic with simply remarking, that while the sufferings and death of Christ are everywhere represented as the special procuring cause of our redemption, yet his obedience is also represented as a concurring cause or ground of our salvation. The Saviour's entire obedience or sinless perfection was essential to his character as a substitute for sinners; for if he himself had sinned, instead of presenting an acceptable sacrifice for others, himself would have needed an expiatory offering. That all which he did and said, during his incarnate condition, had some bearing on the great work which he came to accomplish, and did in some way contribute to it, cannot reasonably be doubted. But his expiatory sacrifice appears to be the great point, on which rests in a peculiar manner the hope of our restoration to the divine favour.

To proceed with the explanation proposed under the present head; when I say *Christ in his sufferings was our* SUBSTITUTE, or, *by them he made an* EXPIATORY OFFERING *for us*, I mean that GOD DID APPOINT AND ACCEPT THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, INSTEAD OF INFLICTING THE PUN-

ISHMENT DUE TO US AS SINNERS AGAINST HIS LAW; and that *in consequence of this appointment and of these sufferings, he does forgive our sins and receive us to his favour.*

A *substitute* is something put in lieu of another thing, and accepted instead of it. An *offering* is something presented to God. An offering which is acceptable to him, is one made by his appointment. An *expiatory* offering, under the Jewish law, was a slain beast, presented to God by his appointment, and by a person who had been guilty of some offence and incurred some penalty; in consequence of which presentation, the penalty for his offence, threatened by the law of Moses, was remitted, or the offender was pardoned. To say then that *Christ made an expiatory offering for us,* according to my apprehension of the meaning of scriptural language, implies that *his sufferings and death were, by divine appointment, accepted instead of the punishment due to us as sinners, and that God, in consequence of the offering made by Christ, pardons our offences and restores us to his favour.* This also is just what I mean, when I say that *Christ in his sufferings and death was our* SUBSTITUTE.

I do not feel at all disposed to find any fault with other language, which Christians may choose to employ, in order to designate the idea that I have now expressed, provided they define the sense in which they employ it, and do not leave it open to misconstruction. So doing they may say: "Christ made satisfaction for our sins;" or, "his death was a full equivalent for the demands of the law;" or, "our punishment—our guilt—was transferred to him;" for certainly our text employs phraseology equally strong, and of the same nature with this. I may also say: "Christ made atonement—Christ atoned—for our sins; his sufferings were *vicarious*—were in lieu of ours; he bore the punishment due to us." I may use other and different expressions of the same nature, to designate my ideas relative to the subject before us; but whatever phraseology of this kind I might employ, or whatever I may employ in this discourse, my meaning would and will be one and the same, viz. *Christ*

was our EXPIATORY OFFERING, *our* SUBSTITUTE, in the sense already explained.

So far as I am able to understand the language which Christians in general, who receive the doctrine of the atonement, have employed in respect to this subject, it is designed to convey the idea that I have just conveyed. I am aware that one may occasionally meet with expressions in some writers, relative to the sufferings of Christ, that seem to imply something more than what I have expressed, or something different from it. But most divines, who have clearly explained themselves, appear to me substantially to agree with the view which I have given of substitution or expiatory offering. If this be the fact, is it not idle to waste time and pains, in contending about certain *modes of expression*, which some may choose to employ, but which others think it better to avoid because they are liable to misconstruction, when, after all, there is a substantial agreement in regard to the idea to be designated? In reality, can such contention amount to anything more than a strife about words? A strife unworthy of sober and earnest inquirers after truth; and one which never can serve any purpose, but to alienate from each other and divide those, who love the Saviour, and trust for acceptance with God solely in his atoning blood.

To pursue still farther the explanation of the leading terms employed to designate the doctrine which I am to establish; a *substitute* may be, and where it is voluntarily accepted on the part of him to whom any debt or reparation is due, *must* be, an *equivalent* of some kind or other, a *satisfaction* in some sense, for such debt or penalty due. But it may be equivalent or satisfactory, without being the same either in kind or quantity as that in the place of which it comes. For plainly an equivalent is of two sorts. The first has respect to *kind* and *quantity*, and requires equality or sameness in regard to both. The second is where the substitute answers the same *end*, as that would have done in the place of which it is put, or a higher end of the same nature. The first species of substitution or equivalency belongs to various transactions of

business among men; such as borrowing and lending, exchange of various species of property, and other things of the like nature. Equivalency of the second kind has respect to transactions of a civil or penal nature, and to the intercourse of rational beings with each other, as subjects of social or other laws. For example, banishment is often substituted by civil governments instead of inflicting the penalty of death; fines, instead of imprisonment or other corporeal punishment. So among men in their daily intercourse, confession of a fault, joined with a request of forgiveness, is accepted as a satisfaction for an injury done, or an insult offered; and is regarded as an equivalent for it. In all cases of this nature, which are exceedingly numerous and diversified, both in regard to the intercourse of men with each other, and in respect to civil rulers and their subjects, the equivalent or satisfaction is not usually the same in kind or quantity as that for which it is substituted. Indeed, in all transactions which have respect to a penalty for any injury done, or any violation of law, where substitution is admitted with regard to the offender, the first kind of equivalency, or that which consists in the same quality and quantity, is out of the question. The *letter* of a penal law demands that the offender himself, and no other, should suffer. But the *object* of the penalty—the ultimate and highest object of attaching it to a law—may be attained, perhaps, in some other way, and by substitution; even in a more effectual manner, in some cases, than by a literal infliction of the punishment threatened. On the supposition that it can be so attained, then if a substitute be admitted instead of literally inflicting the penalty, satisfaction may be truly said to be made, or an equivalent rendered, according to the common usage and understanding of all men, in respect to subjects of this nature. Indeed the term *equivalent* has come, in general usage, most commonly to imply, that the substitute not only may, but actually does, differ in some respects from that for which it is substituted.

If Christ died then as a substitute for sinners, it is not at all necessary to suppose, that his sufferings were the *same*

either in *quality* or *quantity*, as would have been endured by those in whose room he suffered, in case the penalty of the law had been executed upon them. In fact such a supposition is replete with difficulties of a kind not easily to be removed. The worm that never dies—the cup of wrath without mixture which is drunk by sinners in the world of wo—are there not strong reasons for believing that this is the sting of a guilty conscience—self-condemnation and reproach for having violated the just and holy laws of God? This sting the holy and spotless Saviour never felt; this was an agony to which his bosom of perfect purity must have been a stranger. However high then his sufferings mounted, they could not have been the same in *kind*, as those of the wicked in the world of misery.

Nor can we well conceive how they could have been the same in *quantity*, as they deserved whom he redeems. He suffered but a few hours; or, if you include his whole period of humiliation, but a few years. In his divine nature, considered as *the immutable God*, we cannot conceive of his having suffered; and indeed the Scriptures always represent him as having assumed the *human* nature, in order that he might suffer. Phil. 2: 6—8. Heb. 2: 9. Great as his sufferings were, yet they were not like those of the damned, sufferings of absolute and hopeless despair. He could look beyond them, when hanging on the cross. He did. He could see the glory and prosperity of his kingdom as the certain result of them. He had a resurrection from the tomb in full view; he anticipated his ascension to the throne of majesty on high, in order to become "head over all things to the Church," and the object of heavenly worship—in order to participate in "the glory which he had with the Father before the world was." However great then his sufferings were, we can hardly conceive of their having been equal in quantity (so to speak) to those which were due to sinners, for whom he suffered.

When I say then that Christ in his sufferings was our substitute, I do not mean that those sufferings were an equiv-

alent of the first kind, as above described, for the penalty remitted; or, in other words, that he did actually suffer torments the same in *kind* and *quantity* as were due to sinners. But still, it seems to me to be impossible for us to ascertain how great his sufferings really were. The peculiar constitution and the unspeakable dignity of the Saviour's person; the spotless innocence of his character; the agony in the garden which forced his whole frame to sweat as it were great drops of blood; his complaint on the cross that his God had forsaken him; the fact that he expired sooner than those who suffered with him; the commotion of the natural world at the woes which he endured; the heavens shrouded with darkness; the luminary of the skies extinguished; the vail of the most holy place rent, by which Jehovah's awful presence had been hitherto concealed; the rocks and tombs bursting asunder, and the mouldering dust of the saints becoming reanimated with life—all, all concur to show that the scene of suffering was such as the world had never witnessed; and that probable it is not in the power of language to express, nor of our minds to conceive, the extent of the agony which Jesus endured.

That he endured all this as our *substitute*, or on our account, is what I expect hereafter to prove. At present I would merely ask: Since he did *not* suffer on account of *any guilt of his own*, on what ground can they reconcile his sufferings with the *justice* of God, who hold that he was not a substitute for sinners?

Let me dwell a moment longer on the subject of the Saviour's agony, and observe, that unless the sufferings of Christ be regarded as exceedingly great, and in many respects of a nature altogether peculiar, his demeanor under them is quite irreconcilable with the undaunted constancy and patience and firmness, which he at all other times exhibited. When did he ever before shrink from suffering? When was he ever before appalled by danger? Never. Yet now, in what an agony do we behold him in the garden, at the prospect of crucifixion! What sinking of soul, what unutter-

able horror, does he exhibit on the cross! Thousands of other sufferers have met death, in all its most dreadful forms, with far more composure, even when unsupported by the the consolations and hopes of religion. Thousands of martyrs, feeble, emaciated, thousands even of the more delicate sex, have been stretched on the rack, or cast into the flames —punishments more dreadful than simple crucifixion—while with a dauntless, nay with a triumphant spirit, they rejoiced in the midst of torments. But here is a sufferer, the only one on earth who ever had a spotless character, filled too with exalted and certain hopes of ultimate triumph and glory, first shrinking with horror from the cup of suffering which he was to drink, and then uttering language indicative of the highest possible agitation and distress upon the cross.

All this, now, presents a difficulty which cannot be solved, on the ground that his death was in any respect like that of a common man. If it indeed were such, must he not be regarded by every one who contemplates his demeanor on the cross, as wanting in calmness and fortitude of soul, when he was so appalled and agitated with sufferings which others have triumphantly endured? Are we not constrained then to regard him as suffering in a degree unparalleled, indescribable, in short not capable of being adequately conceived of by us?

What this degree was, the Scriptures have not explicitly declared; nor indeed was such a declaration necessary. Enough, that in his suffering the awful displeasure of God against sin has been manifested in a most impressive manner. Enough, if God has judged that his sufferings, as our substitute, were carried to such a height as was by infinite wisdom deemed necessary, in order to promote the best designs of the divine government.

To pursue my explanation; although I cannot consider an equivalent of the first kind as being rendered by the death of Christ, yet I fully believe that one of the second kind was rendered. The *object* of the penalty affixed to the divine law is *not revenge*. "God takes no pleasure in the death of

him that dieth." The object of all penalty, under every wise and benevolent government, is to put restraint upon offences, to exhibit striking testimony or warning against them, and thus to secure the interests of virtue and obedience.

If now virtue be in the best manner promoted, and sin restrained, by the death of Christ and the consequences that necessarily flow from it, then the great *object* of the divine law and its penalties is promoted in the most effectual manner. Such I suppose to be the fact; but this is not the proper place to establish it. I only state so much, therefore, as is necessary to elucidate the meaning which I assign to the language that I have employed. Indeed, I view the great object of the divine law as answered by the death of Christ in a much higher degree, than it could have been by a mere law-administration and literal infliction of the penalty. Must not his death be regarded as a more awful manifestation of divine displeasure against sin, than the execution of the law on sinners themselves? I am forced to view the subject in this light, when I contemplate the infinite dignity of the Saviour's person, and the spotless purity of his character, and then turn my eye to Gethsemane, and to the scenes of the cross.

I confess myself averse to indulging much in speculation here, as to the *how* and the *why* of the equivalency in question. My reason is, that the sacred writers do not seem to indulge in any curious speculation on the subject. Some things, as presented by them, appear exceedingly plain. When they bring to our view the WORD, who was in the beginning with God and who was GOD; who created all things; who is GOD OVER ALL, and blessed forever; the TRUE GOD and eternal life; and represent him as becoming incarnate—as taking the form of a servant and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; and all this on our account, that we might be redeemed from deserved ruin; they do this to excite our gratitude, our love, our humility, our obedience; and also to urge upon us our obligation to devote ourselves, with all we have and are, to the service of him

"who loved us, and who gave himself to die for us." They teach us that the gospel presents motives to obedience of a higher nature, and puts restraints upon vice that are more effectual, than a system of law could do. With this *we* may well be content; for with this *they* appear to have been satisfied. Where is there any philosophizing, any refined speculation in their writings, about the *manner* in which equivalency or satisfaction is or can be made out? Can we not acquiesce in the subject, just as they have left it? If they present the death of Christ as a monitory and most affecting display of the evil of sin, and of the divine displeasure against it, the value of which is enhanced beyond description by the dignity of his person, and the peculiar severity of his sufferings; and if this makes an appeal to the moral sensibilities of the human race, in favour of gratitude and obedience to God, and against sin, in a manner far more affecting and successful, than the literal execution of the penalty of the law on sinners; is not this sufficient? And if thus much lies on the face of the New Testament, and every reader, learned and unlearned, can see and feel it; this is enough. The object of the law is in the most effectual manner answered.

For myself, I need nothing more than this to produce quietude of mind, in regard to this part of our subject. More than this, the Laplander and the Hottentot—nay most of the human race—cannot well be expected to understand; nor can I see how it is really important that they should. If others feel that clear and satisfactory views about the manner in which equivalency is made out, are to be obtained by pursuing the speculations of a refined philosophy, I will not object. But I may suggest one caution, viz., that if we attempt to build the doctrine of atonement on the speculations of philosophy, and do not acquiesce in the matter as it is simply presented by the writers of the New Testament—so simply that the heathen can understand and feel it as well as we—then we must not be surprised, if we find some other modes of what may be deemed more refined philosophy, objecting to the atonement, and claiming a right to prostrate the edifice

which we had supposed to be reared and established, by the same power which has raised it up.

I have said enough, I trust, to explain what I mean, and also what I do *not* mean, by the principal terms employed relative to the doctrine which I am discussing. I pass on then,

II. To prove the doctrine, that Christ in his sufferings was our SUBSTITUTE, or that by them he made an EXPIATORY OFFERING for sinners.

Here I must ask at the threshold: Before what tribunal must the question be brought which this subject necessarily raises?

I am bold to aver that *philosophy* is not a competent judge to decide it. In averring this, however, I take it for granted, that philosophy is unable to disprove the credit due to divine revelation. On the supposition that such is the fact, and as a believer in divine revelation, I hold myself under obligation to prove nothing more in regard to the substitution or expiatory sacrifice of Christ, than that the Scriptures have revealed it as a FACT. Has God declared it to be a FACT? Do the Saviour and his apostles declare it to be so? These are the questions, and the only ones of any particular importance, about which a sincere and implicit believer in the divine testimony needs to be solicitous. It cannot surely be of much consequence, what difficulties can be raised by speculating on philosophical grounds, about the nature or manner of *substitution*. The *fact* itself is that with which we are concerned, as poor ruined sinners. We might indeed well say, that when the authority of revelation is once admitted, the questions *why* and *how*, in respect to the atonement, might be entirely dismissed from our discussion, as being by no means necessarily attached to it. Does philosophy find the doctrine of atonement by the death of the Son of God mysterious? We readily concede that it is so; and we know that the distinguished apostle of the Gentiles believed *the mystery of godliness to be great;* and that the angels themselves are represented as earnestly desirous of prying into this mystery.

But if philosophy wonders here, (for which we will not blame her), yet she has no right to scoff. If atonement by the vicarious suffering and death of Christ be a reality, it is one which the book of God only reveals. I fully agree with the Naturalists in saying, that the book of nature presents nothing but a blank leaf, in respect to an atonement effected in this manner. Not one syllable can be made out from it, with any certainty. The necessity of some atonement or expiatory offering, has indeed been felt by nearly all the human race, however unenlightened. It has been universally acknowledged, in the bloody sacrifices which they have offered to the gods whom they worshipped. But the *method* of it, as proposed in the Gospel, is quite above the discovery of unenlightened or even philosophical reason. The most rigid sect of moralists among the heathen did not admit, that pardoning mercy could with any propriety be extended to those, who had incurred the penalty which justice demanded. Seneca declares that a wise man does not remit the punishment which he ought to exact. (De Clementia II. 6, 7). How then could this philosopher, or those who were like him, discover or believe the doctrine of substitution or vicarious suffering by the death of the Son of God? What they never imagined, or what many when it is proposed to them regard as foolishness, God has declared to be the means of salvation. To *revelation* then we must go for any instruction, with regard to the doctrine of pardoning mercy through the atoning blood of Jesus.

But another view of the subject is necessarily suggested by that which has now been taken. This is, that as philosophy was unable to discover the doctrine of atonement by Christ, so she is equally incompetent to make any valid objections against it. She cannot show that it is absurd. Could this be done, then we must admit that the doctrine of atonement by vicarious suffering would be incapable of defence; for the human mind, if it be well illuminated, and guided in its researches by candour and a love of truth, cannot receive and accredit that which is absurd. But who does not know that through ignorance, prejudice, and haste, or when influenced

by erroneous philosophy, some men may pronounce things to be absurd, which the most acute, sober, and judicious think to be very rational? In regard, however, to the doctrine of substitution, the matter seems to be quite clear. Absurd this doctrine of itself cannot be called; for the wisest and best human governments, as has already been mentioned, often admit the principle in respect to penalties incurred. But will any one venture, on account of this, to accuse civil rulers of acting irrationally and absurdly? Will any one even venture the assertion, that this principle, prudently and soberly applied, is not the means of evident gain in respect to the great ends which civil government is designed to accomplish? If not, then surely it must be conceded, that infinite power, connected with infinite wisdom and benevolence, *can* employ substitution in such a way as to promote the important ends of the divine government. Philosophy, most evidently, has it not in her power to disprove this; and therefore has no right to deny the possibility of it; much less to declare that the doctrine is absurd. In short, as she *cannot* do this, nor disprove the credit due to revelation, it is plain that the matter comes not at all within her jurisdiction.

The question in respect to *substitution*, then, stands high above the objections which all the efforts of philosophy can raise; equally unaffected by her sophistry at one time, or by her scorn and contumely at another.

It follows from what has been said, that the impossibility of substitution, under the divine government, cannot be established. Nay, I advance farther, and aver that so far from there being any impossibility in the case, it is a matter of fact that substitution was admitted for nearly fifteen centuries, under the Mosaic dispensation; to say nothing of the expiatory sacrifices of the patriarchal age. It was admitted, too, under the Mosaic economy, as a type of the substitution or expiatory offering of Christ. Paul has taught us, in the most explicit manner, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, that *all the expiatory offerings and sacrifices of the Jews were typical of the great atoning sacrifice by the death of Christ; and that they*

were originally designed by God to be so. Consequently, when thus authorized, we may draw a comparison from the one, in order to illustrate the other.

The expiatory offerings of the law were not a substitution, I admit, which did of itself procure a remission of the punishment due to the *moral* turpitude of sin; for it is impossible, as the sacred writer has told us, that the blood of goats and bullocks should take away sin, and tranquillize the conscience wounded by a sense of guilt. It could not remove the apprehension, that divine displeasure might inflict on the offender punishment of a spiritual nature. But still, it is a fact that the blood of goats and bullocks was appointed by God, to be an expiatory offering for certain offences against the Jewish law; while at the same time this very offering was also a type of the sacrifice to be offered by Christ, in order to remove the punishment due to moral turpitude. He who brought a sin or trespass offering, and presented it to the Lord, was exempted from the sentence which the law of Moses pronounced against the external offence that he had committed. The whole nation, as such, were freed, on the great day of atonement, from the penalty annexed to certain offences, when the high-priest entered the most holy place, and presented the blood of the national offering or victim before Jehovah; not indeed from the punishment of a *spiritual* nature due to sin, but from penalty of an external nature, threatened to be inflicted during the present life. In a word, God as the sovereign legislator and judge of the Jews did, by the exercise of his supreme right, actually appoint sin and trespass offerings as expiatory sacrifices; which, being presented agreeably to his appointment, were followed by the real remission, on his part, of the penalty due to certain offences, which was threatened by the law of Moses. So the apostle himself states the subject: "The blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling those who were defiled, made expiation in respect to external purity," i. e. after the performance of such

sacrificial rites, the Jews were regarded and treated, in respect to their external relations, as pure or free from exposure to the penalty threatened by the law of Moses. Heb. 9: 23.

The fact just stated cannot be called in question. We have only to open the book of Leviticus, and it is at once exhibited before our eyes.

Here, then, we are presented with a case of substitution; *actual* substitution by the appointment of God, the supreme legislator and judge of the Jewish nation and of all men; a case in which a beast was slain, instead of the criminal being punished who made an offering of it, and who had himself incurred the penalty of the Mosaic law.

But *how* and *why* such an expiation as has been described was made by the blood of slain beasts, different persons have endeavoured, and might endeavour, to explain in various ways. I cannot enter at all here, into the discussion of this point. Suffice it to say, that all who admit the reasoning in the epistle to the Hebrews, must admit that the Jewish sacrifices were typical of the sacrifice of Christ. Do not the representations of the Scripture also entitle us to believe, that the penitent offender, who was sufficiently enlightened in respect to the true nature of the Mosaic dispensation, while he knew that by his offering penalties of an external nature would of course be remitted to him, might and probably did, by faith, look forward to the great atoning sacrifice, the antitype of that which he offered, for a remission of the punishment of a spiritual nature, which was due to his transgressions?

Considering now the facts in regard to this whole subject, as they stand disclosed in the Jewish Scriptures, who will venture to pronounce, that a similar arrangement under the general government of God in respect to men, is impossible? The *moral* purposes of God in respect to this government, we may cheerfully admit, are the highest purposes which are known to us. But had he no moral purposes to effect under the Jewish dispensation, and by the Mosaic institutes? Most certainly he had. Incipient and imperfect they were indeed, compared with the great moral ends accomplished by

the Gospel. But still they were real. Yet God, as the supreme lawgiver and judge of the Jews, did, in some cases, remit the penalty of his law as given by Moses, in consequence of a *substitute* for it. Now if the thing itself were absurd or impossible, he could not have done it. Nor can we conceive of any more impossibility that he should do the same thing under his general government of men, than that he should do it under the Jewish dispensation. Wrong is not more really done (if there be wrong at all) in the one case, than in the other; and the one is therefore just as possible for God as the other. So far as we can see, there is no more hazard to the general interests of the universe, in the admission of vicarious sacrifice for sinners, than there was to the Jewish commonwealth, by the admission of expiatory offering into its system of government.

In a word, God did admit vicarious sacrifices under his government of the Jews; and an inspired apostle has taught us that they were, and were designed to be, types of the great expiatory offering made by Christ. To express it in another manner: That was done in ancient times upon a smaller scale, which at a later period was done on a larger one. The penalty for certain offences against the Mosaic law, was removed by the sacrifice of goats and bullocks; and the penalty against the higher law of heaven, (if you please so to name it), is removed by the death of Christ. If both are by the arrangement of heaven, the one presents no more impossibility than the other.

Nor can it be objected here, that the expiatory sacrifices of the law procured merely the remission of a civil or ecclesiastical penalty, which was wholly of an external nature, and could be inflicted by men; but that the removal of the penalty due to moral turpitude, is a very different thing, and has a much more important bearing upon the interests of God's moral government. I accede to the fact that it has. But this does not render an expiatory offering impossible, *provided one adequate to the occasion can be made.* I believe the Scriptures teach us, that such an one has been made by

the Son of God. As the end to be accomplished by a Saviour's death was of a far higher and nobler nature, than that accomplished by the sacrifices of the Levitical law, so the victim that was to be offered, was of a rank which corresponded to the object to be attained. The redemption of men from everlasting death, (not of the Jews only but also of the Gentiles), was concerned with this sacrifice. Well then might the apostle draw the admirable comparison, which he has drawn in Heb. 9: 13, 14, between the one species of offering and the other. "If," says he, "the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how MUCH MORE shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God." That is: 'If the beast which perished forever under the knife of the sacrificing priest, did still, by divine appointment, make atonement for certain offences against the Mosaic law, so that the penalty denounced against them was remitted, and the offender treated as though he were not guilty, how *much more* shall the holy Saviour, a victim possessed of a nobler nature —of a never-dying spirit—make expiation for the moral turpitude of offences against God as the governor of the world.'

If this reasoning of the apostle be admitted, then we can never prove the impossibility of atonement for sin, by alleging that no victim can be adequate to the occasion. For the apostle plainly declares that the sacrifice of Christ was *more* adequate to the purpose for which it was made, than the death of the victim under the ancient dispensation was, to the occasion which demanded it.

Nor can the *justice* of God be alleged as constituting a ground of impossibility, that an expiatory offering should be admitted for sinners. All men, who hold that there is forgiveness at all with God, must of course concede that his justice is no more impugned by the forgiveness of sin *through* an atonement, than it would be *without* any atonement.

Consequently no objection of this nature can be urged by such, against the possibility of atonement.

Nor are the advocates of propitiatory sacrifice obliged to content themselves with merely showing that it is *possible*. They may advance farther, and venture to say, that the *improbability* of such an arrangement under the divine government, can in no valid manner be shown. Will its opponents appeal to the feelings of men in general, and declare that such a sacrifice is naturally revolting to the human mind? How then comes it to pass, that every tribe and nation, from the philosophic Greeks down to the roaming Tartars and the fiend-like race of New Zealand—every part of our degraded race however ignorant or barbarous, that have at all acknowledged the existence of any divinity—have agreed in offering to him propitiatory sacrifices? Does this universal custom of the mere children of nature, look as if the doctrine were revolting to the first principles of the human breast? Or does it look as if the hand of Omnipotence had enstamped on the very elements of our moral constitution, a susceptibility of receiving it, a predisposition to admit it? Who will or can explain the origin and prevalence of vicarious sacrifices, on any other ground that this?

I proceed one step further. To me it seems plain, that although reason, unenlightened by revelation, never could have discovered a way of pardon for sin by the expiatory death of the Son of God, yet, when all the attributes of the Deity are brought into full view by the Scriptures, and the character of man is also developed in full, reason may then well give, and to preserve her character *must* give, her assent to the doctrine of pardon by expiatory sacrifice, if she finds it there revealed.

God is *just;* therefore he will punish sin: and if we read only the book of nature, must we not say too, with Seneca, "therefore he cannot forgive it?" But revelation discloses his attribute of *mercy;* and mercy consists essentially in remitting the strict claims of justice, either in whole or in part. How then shall God possess these two attributes, and ex-

ercise them in respect to our guilty rebellious race? A question which "ages and generations" could not answer; a mystery hidden from them. A question which philosophy may seek in vain satisfactorily to solve. But in the cross of Christ—in his expiatory sufferings and death—we may find an answer. Here, "mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have embraced each other." In the agonies of Christ, a personage of such transcendent dignity and glory, we see the terrors of divine justice displayed in the most affecting manner, and are impressively taught what evil is due to sin. In the pardon purchased by his death, we contemplate the riches of divine mercy. God might have displayed his justice, indeed, in the world of perdition, and called us to contemplate it as written in characters that would make us shudder. His mercy also he might have displayed, by the absolute and unconditional pardon of sinners, provided no atonement had been made. But who could look on the radiance of his simple justice, as exhibited only in such a manner as I have stated, without extinguishing his vision forever? Or who could contemplate undiscriminating and unconditional mercy only, without being influenced to forget the awful displeasure of God against sin, or being emboldened to continue in it? But in the cross of Jesus, his justice and his mercy are united. Here is the bright spot where the effulgency of the Deity converges and concenters. On this we may gaze with admiration, with calmness, with delight; for here the rays of eternal glory meet and blend, so as to be sweetly attempered to our vision. The bow in the cloud, where the glories of the sun, the brightest image of its Maker in the natural world, meet and mingle, and present to our view the delightful token that the waters of a flood will drown the earth no more, is but a faint emblem of the attempered glory which beams from the cross of Jesus, the token of deliverance from a flood more awful than that of Noah.

DISCOURSE II.

ISAIAH LIII. 5, 6.

HE WAS WOUNDED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS; HE WAS BRUISED FOR OUR INIQUITIES; THE CHASTISEMENT OF OUR PEACE WAS UPON HIM; AND BY HIS STRIPES ARE WE HEALED. ALL WE LIKE SHEEP HAVE GONE ASTRAY; WE HAVE TURNED EVERY ONE TO HIS OWN WAY; AND THE LORD HATH LAID ON HIM THE INIQUITY OF US ALL.

I HAVE endeavoured, in the preceding discourse, to make such explanations as are necessary to a right understanding of our subject; and to prepare the way for the introduction of direct proof from the Scriptures respecting the expiatory sacrifice of Christ. I have endeavoured also to show, that we cannot refer the question, whether an expiatory offering has been made by the Son of God for the sins of men, to the tribunal of philosophy. The impossibility of such an offering, philosophy cannot prove. The fact that substitution in the case of penalties incurred, did for many centuries constitute a distinguishing characteristic in the administration of divine government among the Jews, must be admitted; and the possibility that it may constitute a prominent feature of God's *general* government, cannot therefore be disproved. I have ventured even to advance a step farther, and undertaken to show that the improbability of an atonement for sin can by no means be made out; inasmuch as the human race at large are deeply impressed with the need of propitiatory sacrifice. Moreover, the attributes of God and the character of man, as revealed in the Scriptures, render the doctrine of pardon for sin through the expiatory offering of Christ, by no means improbable.

If I have succeeded in my endeavours to remove obsta-

cles, which seemed to lie in the way of making an impartial estimate of Scripture testimony in respect to the subject before us, and have also shown that the whole question must be referred for decision solely to the word of God, then we are prepared without embarrassment to pursue the inquiry: What is the *testimony of revelation* on this subject?

Let me here premise a few considerations respecting the kind of appeal which I am about to make to the Scriptures; and then my proof shall be very brief. For nothing can be plainer, than that if "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," then "the mouth of two or three witnesses" is enough to establish the point at which I aim. Of the very numerous texts, therefore, to which I might appeal, I shall select but a few; and for every attentive and intelligent reader of the Bible, these may serve as a clue to all the rest.

My first remark is, that every speaker and writer, intending to be understood, employs, and *necessarily* employs, language in the same sense, in which those whom he addresses use and understand it. None will deny so plain a proposition. Nor can it be deemed less certain, that the sacred writers designed to be understood by those whom they addressed.

My second remark is, that all the writers of the Old and New Testament were Jews; and that all the Scriptures, with very little exception, were originally addressed to Jews, or to churches which in part consisted of Jews. If we design, then, to come at the meaning of the sacred writers, we must necessarily construe their language in the same way as the Jews would naturally construe it, who lived in the age of the prophets and apostles. Nothing can be more plain and irrefragable, than this maxim of interpretation. It is no part of the inquiry, what ideas *we* may affix to the language of Scripture, coming to read it in another tongue, in another region, nurtured in the bosom of speculative philosophy, and desirous of adjusting everything to our own standard. WHAT IDEAS DID THE PROPHETS, APOSTLES, AND EVANGELISTS MEAN TO CONVEY? is the only proper question, for one who

goes simply to the law and to the testimony for the grounds of his belief.

Let us then call to mind, that every Jew was habitually conversant with *expiatory sacrifices*, with *substitution;* that the system of substitution was inwrought into the very constitution of his religious worship; and that all the Scripture language, which has respect to the sacrifice of Christ, is directly borrowed from that which was every day used by the Jew, in speaking of the sacrifices that he was required to offer.

With these facts in view, we are ready to present the subject, as it lies before us in the Scriptures.

Our text is fresh in your minds, and I need not here repeat it. It asserts that the 'chastisement or punishment by which our peace is procured, was laid upon the Saviour; that by his wounds we are healed; that all we have gone astray, i. e. sinned; and that Jehovah hath laid on him the punishment due to us.' Other parts of the chapter, from which our text is taken, repeat the same idea. "For the transgression of my people was he smitten," v. 8; "his soul [i. e. he] was made an offering for sin," v. 10; "he shall justify [i. e. procure pardon for] many, for he shall bear their iniquities," v. 11; "he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors," v. 12.

I only ask here, whether any man can rationally and candidly indulge doubts, in what manner the Jews whom the prophet addressed, must necessarily have understood this language?

In regard to the New Testament, it is so full of the doctrine in question, that the only difficulty lies in making a proper selection of testimony.

Peter has quoted some of the passages, which I have just cited. Observe how he comments on this sentiment. "Who his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree .... by whose stripes ye were healed," 1 Pet. 2: 24. Again, "We were not redeemed with corruptible things .... but by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and

without spot," 1 Pet. 1: 18, 19. John the Baptist also exclaims: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world;" i. e. the victim, who by divine appointment is, through his expiatory death, to procure pardon for men, John 1: 29. So the apostle John: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin," 1 John 1: 7. "Who is the propitiation [or propitiatory sacrifice] for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," 1 John 2: 2. Paul abounds, everywhere, with the most glowing sentiments in respect to this great point. "For he hath made him to be sin [i. e. a sin offering] for us, who knew no sin," 2 Cor. 5: 21. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," 1 Cor. 5: 7. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins," Eph. 1: 7. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation [or propitiatory sacrifice], through faith in his blood .... to declare his righteousness [i. e. for the manifestation of his pardoning mercy], by the remission of sins," Rom. 3: 25. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," Gal. 3: 13.

It were easy to proceed, and fill out my whole discourse with passages of the like import. But the limits which I have prescribed to myself forbid; and I shall close with two texts more, where the resemblance, between the sacrifices under the law and the offering of Christ, is so brought into view, that it is impossible to mistake the writer's meaning. "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high-priest for sin, are burned without the camp; wherefore Jesus also, that he might make expiation (ἁγιάσῃ) for the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate," Heb. 13: 11, 12. In other words, what was done in the type, was fulfilled in the antitype. Again: "For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered up himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God!" Heb. 9. 13, 14.

I ask now of any candid man, who has some proper conception of the manner in which the Jews employed language of this nature, nothing more, than that laying his hand on his heart, and making the appeal to him who searches that heart, he would inquire, whether a Jew, addressing Jews with such language as this, could expect or wish to be understood in any other way, than as inculcating the doctrine of *substitution*, or the *expiatory sufferings* of Jesus?

I have done with citing testimony; for if what I have adduced does not establish the fact, that the sacred writers did mean to inculcate the doctrine in question, then plainly, the many scores of additional texts which might be quoted, will not prove it; nor any language, I must add, which it would be in the power of a human being to employ.

As a proof of this I only advert to the manner in which all plain unlettered Christians have always understood these texts, from the time of the apostles down to the present moment. They never had a doubt on the subject of their meaning, unless some speculating theologian excited it; and of themselves, I do believe, they never would have one to the end of time.

But I may make an appeal of another kind, in regard to the manner in which this language is and must be understood, by men deeply versed in the idiom of the Scriptures, but wholly indifferent in regard to the fact, whether one or another doctrine is there taught, because they do not recognize the authority of Scripture to decide upon such matters. The most distinguished oriental and biblical scholar now living, who disclaims all belief in anything supernatural in the Scriptures, and through the influence of his philosophy maintains that a miracle is impossible, and who therefore cannot be said to have any prejudices in favour of the doctrine of atonement, says, at the close of a masterly explanation of the language of the chapter from which my text is taken, that "most Hebrew readers, who had once been acquainted with offerings and *substitution*, must NECESSARILY understand the words of our chapter as asserting it; and there is NO DOUBT," he adds,

"that the *apostolic representation, in respect to the propitiatory death of Christ*, certainly rests, in a manner altogether preëminent, on this ground." (Gesenius, Comm. über Jesaiam, LIII.)

So much for the testimony of Scripture and for the manner in which the unlearned and the learned have understood it, and do still understand it.

We come, then, if my proof is valid, to the simple alternative, either to admit the doctrine in question, or to reject the authority of the sacred writers. There is no other path which can be taken, unless it can be fairly shown, that the interpretation which has been given to the language cited above, is not agreeable to the usage of speech among the Jews; an undertaking which, I am well persuaded, is desperate; and one which no critic, no philologist, can ever accomplish, until the whole history of Jewish ideas in respect to these subjects, during former ages, is blotted out from the records of the world. I repeat it, then, for I do most solemnly believe it, that we must either receive the doctrine of substitution and expiatory offering by the death of Christ, or virtually lay aside the authority of the Scriptures, and lean upon our own philosophy.

III. I come now, according to the plan of my discourses, to consider some of the objections made against the doctrine of the atonement.

I do not feel it to be important, here, to dwell upon them at length. There is only one method in which any legitimate objections can be made, by those who admit the authority of revelation. This is, to show that the language of Scripture, according to Jewish idiom, does not mean what I have interpreted it as meaning. But this mode of objecting, the speculators and skeptics who have rejected the doctrine of substitution, have been very careful to avoid. Their refuge is philosophy. They raise doubts about equivalency; they must see, as philosophers, the *why* and the *how* in respect to this mysterious transaction. Whatever pertains to this part of the subject, however, I have sufficiently dwelt

upon already. I shall therefore only glance here, at some of the most popular methods employed to oppose the doctrine of substitution, or to explain it away.

OBJ. 1. 'An atonement for sin is unnecessary. God can forgive it as well without an atonement as with one; and the doctrine, if true, divests the supreme Being of the attribute of mercy. If the full debt is paid, where is there any room for mercy in forgiving it?'

But who is to decide the point, whether God *can* forgive sin without an atonement? The natural possibility of it, I admit; that is, I admit that as sovereign of the universe, and possessing omnipotence, he might pardon sin, (if he had judged it best to do so), without the intervention of a suffering substitute. But this is no real part of our question. What *has* he judged best, is the only proper inquiry; and how can this be answered? Only, as we have already seen, by revelation. But that revelation tells us, it is "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world;" that "there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, nor is there salvation in any other," Acts 4: 12; that "there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all," 1 Tim. 2: 5, 6; and that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and consequently, must be "gratuitously justified through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth as a propitiatory sacrifice," Rom. 3: 23—25.

The point then is put at rest by the Bible. And when those who doubt, admonish us that it would be *unbecoming* in respect to the Supreme Being, and derogatory to his character, to suppose that the sufferings of Christ, an innocent victim, were deemed by him to be necessary or acceptable; I answer simply with Paul: "For it BECAME him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in order to bring many sons to glory, to make perfect the Captain of their salvation through sufferings," Heb. 2: 10.

When they further allege, also, that the attribute of mercy

is virtually denied to the Supreme Being, by the supposition of an atonement, they can say this, only on the ground that an exact and literal equivalent for the penal part of the divine law, both as to the *kind* and *quantity* of suffering, has been demanded of the substitute; a doctrine incapable, as we have seen, of being supported; and to meet the difficulties of which, I certainly will not incur any responsibility. The simple scriptural statement of substitution, is not liable to this objection.

OBJ. 2. 'The motives to strenuous effort in order to live a virtuous and holy life, are greatly weakened by the doctrine in question.'

This objection is as old, at least, as the time of Paul; and it is met by him in such a manner as to save us, at the present time, from the necessity of any effort to make an adequate reply. After representing the death of Christ (Rom. iii.) as the only foundation of the sinner's hope, he meets this very objection, which he knew would be made by those who doubted his doctrine, in these words; "Do we then *make void* the law, through faith?" i. e. do we diminish the force of moral precept or obligation, by preaching the doctrine of gratuitous pardon through atoning blood? To which he answers at once: "God forbid; rather we *establish* the law," i. e. we enforce its obligations by higher motives than before existed. After illustrating, by various instances, the fact that such a method of justifying sinners is presented to view in the Jewish Scriptures, he resumes the consideration of the objection. He represents the objector as suggesting: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid," he answers again, "how shall we who are dead to sin, any longer continue to practise it?" Rom. 6: 1, 2. He then goes on to show, (which is indeed a most conclusive and irrefragable answer to the whole objection), that Christianity, from its very nature, implies of necessity the mortification of all our sinful passions and appetites; it is itself, in its very essence, a principle directly

hostile to them, and therefore never can indulge or foster them.

All the difficulty of objectors here, arises from overlooking the whole of this grand point. Atoning blood, extensive and gratuitous as the favours are which it proffers, never proffered one unconditionally. The sinner must be humbled, and penitent, who is sprinkled with it. The grace of God, which has appeared to all men through a Saviour's death, inculcates on them, without exception, the absolute necessity of denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts. It urges this, as the New Testament most amply shows, by excitements to virtue of a higher nature, and by penalties for offences more awful, than any system of law could offer or impose.

OBJ. 3. 'There is no need of laying so much stress upon the death of Christ, or of regarding him as our *substitute* in any sense. He may very properly be called our Saviour and Redeemer, inasmuch as by his instructions, he has taught us the way in which we may acceptably obey God.'

That to give instruction was a part of Christ's errand on earth, as our Redeemer, I cheerfully admit. But that this was the great work, which marked him exclusively as the Saviour of sinners, it is quite impossible to prove. What! Have we not other instructors, such too as were inspired, as well as he? Did he write the New Testament? Did he, who taught about three years, who was never out of Palestine, and made but few disciples, teach as much, and labour with as much success, as Paul, who preached about thirty years, and traversed the world to proclaim the messages of salvation? If the simple fact of giving instruction, of making disciples, of successfully inculcating the truth, makes a Redeemer, then who has the best title to that appellation, Paul, or (I speak it with reverence) Jesus of Nazareth? And to whom should the songs of the redeemed in heaven be directed? Have we not, too, on such ground as this, just as many redeemers as we have, or have had, religious teachers?

OBJ. 4. 'The death of Christ was a seal or confirmation

of the truth, by which we are enlightened and saved. It is unnecessary to consider what the Scriptures say of its efficacy, as amounting to any more than this.'

Is this so? Then was Stephen, and James, and Peter, and Paul, and every other martyr to the cause of truth, who has sealed his testimony to it by his own blood, our redeemer too. Shall we then bow the knee to them for this testimony, and ascribe our salvation, at least in part, to them? And the redeemed in heaven—do they ascribe salvation to *martyrs*, when they cast their crowns at the feet of the LAMB, and sing: THOU *wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by* THY *blood?*

OBJ. 5. 'Christ was our Redeemer, in that he has by his example set before us an acceptable way of worship, and taught us, by personal obedience both active and passive, how we may please God.'

The force of his example to inculcate virtue and piety, we ought most gratefully to acknowledge. But the *redeeming* efficacy of it, I cannot by any means admit. A most conclusive reason against such a view of it, is found in the fact, that while his example could, of course, have an influence only during his life, and on times *after* those in which he lived, his atonement is represented as reaching back to the very origin of our race. Thus Paul: "If the blood of bulls and goats . . . . . sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh; how *much more* shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God. And for this cause, [i. e. because his expiatory sacrifice possesses a spiritual or moral efficacy of such a nature], he is the Mediator of the new covenant, so that, his death having taken place to make expiation (εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν) for *sins committed under the former covenant*, they who are called may receive the promised blessings of the heavenly inheritance," Heb. 9: 13—15. That his death is here plainly considered by the apostle, as having a *retrospective* view and influence, is clear from what follows. After observing that the Jewish sacri-

fices needed to be often repeated, he goes on to say: "The death of Christ once only was sufficient; if this were not so," he adds, "then he must *often* have suffered *since the foundation of the world.*" That is, the object which his death has now accomplished, the expiatory sacrifice which he has now made, must be adequate for men in all ages; for the past, as well as for the future; otherwise Christ must have *often* suffered, since the foundation of the world, Heb. 9: 25, 26.

Exactly to the same purpose, is the sentiment in the third chapter of the epistle to the Romans. After asserting that God had sent forth Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice, Paul adds: "To declare or manifest his gratuitous method of justification by the forgiveness of sins in past times, [or, so that the sins of former times might be remitted], through the divine lenity; and to declare his gratuitous method of justification, at the present time," Rom. 3: 25, 26. The opposition of *present* time here, to the *past* in the preceding clause, shows beyond all reasonable doubt, as it seems to me, that the object of the apostle is to assert, not only the influence of Christ's propitiatory sacrifice, but its extension to *past* times as well as to present; and of course, the sentiment is the same with that which is disclosed in the epistle to the Hebrews.

Here then we may take our stand in defence of *vicarious* sacrifice, secure against being moved by suggestions, that *example* is the great point in the Redeemer's work. Here, at all events, is *vicarious* influence, if there be influence on ages that have passed by. And that the apostle means to assert this, appears to me as clear as any other sentiment deducible from his writings.

OBJ. 6. The last objection which I shall notice, is, 'that to represent the innocent as suffering for the guilty, is a virtual impeachment of divine equity, and of those principles of moral government which the ruler of the universe has established.'

To him, who acknowledges the Scriptures as a divine rev-

elation, I reply simply in their language: "He hath made him to be a sin-offering, who *knew no sin*," i. e. the innocent has suffered for the guilty, 2 Cor. 5: 21. "But Christ hath once suffered for sins, the *just* for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," 1 Pet. 3: 18. Such is the *fact;* and I merely ask: Is God unjust? and do the Scriptures represent him to be so, because of this?

Even to those who do not acknowledge the authority of the Scriptures, to the sober Rationalist or Theist, I might present a greater difficulty still. Children suffer on account of the crimes of their parents; nations, on account of the vices of their rulers; and that, without the consent of the sufferers. Yet, by their own acknowledgment, divine justice and the principles of moral government are not impeachable on this account. Are they so then, if Christ *voluntarily*, and out of pity and love, suffered the just for the unjust?

But I must leave the examination of objections. I dismiss them all with this single remark. When it shall be shown that the language of the Scriptures must not, according to rules of interpretation which are fundamental and capable of demonstration, be construed as conveying, and as designed to convey, the idea of a vicarious or expiatory offering by the death of Christ; when it shall be shown that there is even a possibility, that the Jews could have understood it in a different way; then we may consider the doctrine of substitution as doubtful: but never till then, unless our own conjectural reasonings are to usurp the place of the sacred writers, in deciding upon this matter.

Having thus briefly canvassed the topics proposed for consideration at the commencement of my discourses, I shall close with a few reflections on the subject which has been discussed.

1. The doctrine of the atonement is a fundamental doctrine in the Christian system; and that which distinguishes it, in a peculiar manner, from all other systems of religion.

It is *fundamental;* because, often as belief in a Saviour is urged in the New Testament, and urged as the indispensa-

ble condition of salvation, equally often is belief in that Saviour, as our atoning sacrifice, urged; and equally conspicuous is this point, in the whole system of the Christian religion. It is not merely, or principally, in Jesus as our teacher, our example, or as having sealed the truth of his testimony by his own blood, that we are called to believe; but principally in him, in that very character in which he was "to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, while unto them who are saved, he is wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." What says Paul to the Corinthians? "I am determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him CRUCIFIED," 1 Cor. 2: 2. Why Christ CRUCIFIED? Why not Christ as a teacher, an example, a martyr, a prophet? Plainly because whatever was done by Christ in all these characters, it would have utterly failed to accomplish the design of saving men, unless his expiatory death had also taken place. Christ *crucified*, then, is the very point on which ultimately hang all the hopes of our sinful race. So Paul viewed it, when he said: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the CROSS of Christ," Gal. 6: 14. So we too ought to view it. Other systems of religion teach the existence, attributes, and moral government of God. This does Judaism in its modern form; this does Theism; this does even Mohammedism. Other systems inculcate our social and relative duties. The religion of Hindoostan exhibits the Deity in a state of incarnation; so that even this is not in all respects peculiar to Christianity. But no religion save the Christian, exhibits the incarnate WORD, suffering, bleeding, dying for sinners; a Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. This is at once the glory and the hope of the Christian system. This is what marks it with a peculiarity, which makes it exceedingly distinct from, and superior to, all other systems. Give up this point, and you confound the broad line of distinction, which separates it from all else that is called religion. Suffer this sun even to be eclipsed, and the race of man is covered with gloom. Quench his glory, and we are at once involved

in ten-fold more than Egyptian night; we are doomed to wander in the shadow of death, on which no morning rays will ever dawn, nor one gleam of radiance ever fall to alleviate its terrors.

2. I remark, finally, that a Saviour suffering for us, the eternal WORD, GOD manifest in the flesh, and in our nature offering an expiatory sacrifice, presents to the moral sympathies of our race, higher excitements to virtue and piety, and more powerful dissuasives from sin, than any other consideration which the Christian religion proffers.

I am quite confident, that I might safely undertake to establish the correctness of this observation, from the nature of our moral constitution, and the manner in which we are most successfully influenced to engage in the mortification of our sinful appetites, and in the practice of virtue. But I will not make such an appeal, because I choose to rest the whole subject on the Scriptures and the actual experience of Christians.

Paul, when speaking on the topic now introduced, says: "God *commendeth his love toward us*, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," Rom. 5: 8. "Greater love than this hath no man, that he lay down his life for his friends;" but Christ has far surpassed this. The same apostle says: "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son," Rom. 5: 10. Here then is a consideration which will make every heart to vibrate, that is not lost to all sense of gratitude and of mercy. How many thousands have heard the thunders of Sinai unmoved; and even while their awful power has made the very ground to rock on which they stood, how many have still turned a deaf ear to all the admonitions and threatenings which they conveyed, and grown more desperate in their resolutions to persist in rebellion against God! Yet, after all, they have been melted down by the proclamation of Jesus' dying love, and have fallen as humble suppliants at the foot of his cross. Yes, we may say with John: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us," 1 John 3: 16. And again: "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent

his only begotten Son into the world, that we might have life through him." But on what point did this love principally rest? Where did all the glories of benevolence concenter? The same apostle immediately informs us: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins;" i. e. when we were enemies to God, Christ died as our propitiatory offering, and made reconciliation for us, 1 John 3: 9, 10. Herein is love indeed, and hard must be that heart which can resist the proposal of it; for if any consideration can avail to subdue the stubborn spirit of the human breast, this must be the one which has the most powerful influence of all.

I appeal to fact. When the missionaries of the United Brethren undertook to preach the eternal power and Godhead of the Deity, as displayed in the creation, to the poor benighted Greenlanders, they listened, they gazed, they turned away with silent neglect. The faithful disciples urged on them still more vehemently the attributes of the Creator and Judge of all, and their moral accountability to him. They listened; but their hearts remained like the eternal ice, with which their region is overspread. Compassion for their perishing condition made the servants of Jesus more urgent still. One other chord there was, which perhaps, when touched, might be made to vibrate. They touched it with a faithful hand. They proclaimed to the poor, gazing, perishing heathen, a Saviour, bleeding, groaning, dying for them. They pointed them to his bleeding hands, his wounded side; they bid them look to that Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. The sight prostrated them to the earth. Their stubborn hearts melted like wax before the fire. They fell at the foot of a dying Saviour's cross, and exclaimed: Lord Jesus, save us or we perish forever!

Yes, and millions of the ransomed, who have gone to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, can testify to the power of this mighty truth on their rebellious hearts. God so commended his love toward them, by disclosing a Saviour dying on their account, that they could no longer resist the

invitations of his mercy. It was a mighty stream, rushing on with overwhelming power, and bearing everything away before it.

That Jesus died, and died for us; that he was our SUBSTITUTE; that his tender compassion did take us into view individually; that he took our nature in order to enter most intimately, most endearingly, into our sympathies, and propose himself to us under the most attractive form; is the view which Paul took of the Redeemer's work. He was not an isolated monument of suffering, and of God's displeasure against sinners; not merely a sign that sin could be pardoned, by which only an abstract testimony could be given, like that which the rainbow gives of God's covenant to drown the earth no more—a symbol which might have served equally well for angels or for men. No; "Verily he did not assist the angels, but the seed of Abraham." Man was the object—the only object—of his incarnation, sufferings, and death. Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining unto God, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people. For in that he himself suffered, being tempted, he is able also to succour those that are tempted," Heb. 2: 16—18. See what pains is here taken to represent the suffering Saviour as participating in our nature, and entering with the most tender sympathy into all our wants and woes. Is this to propose him as a mere example of suffering, cold, distant, abstract; or is it to make him such a high-priest as we needed, one who can be touched with a feeling for our infirmities, having been tempted in all points as we are? Speak, ye whose hearts have been melted by a Saviour's love, and tell us. Yes, ye who live amid the horrors of eternal winter and storm; or ye, who roam in deserts parched beneath a burning sun; all ye, who once were without God and without hope in the world, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise, speak, and say: Is not this the Saviour you need; the Saviour who has cheered your desponding hearts; who has opened to you the prospect of glory? Is

not this he whom your souls love? Speak, ye redeemed, encircling his throne above, and casting your crowns at his feet. Is not this he who drew your souls to him by bonds of love stronger than death, which many waters could not quench, nor floods drown? Hark! I hear the notes of that song, which fills all the regions of heaven with harmony. It echoes back to this distant world: "THOU WAST SLAIN, AND HAST REDEEMED US TO GOD BY THY BLOOD, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and hast made us kings and priests unto our God forever and ever." O for a heart and tongue to unite with this grateful, happy throng, and begin on earth the notes which we hope to sing, through everlasting ages, in the world above!

Fear not, my brethren, who are to preach this precious Saviour to a perishing world, fear not that the declaration of his atoning blood will ever palsy the moral energies of the soul. What says that great apostle, who won more souls to Jesus than any other herald of his salvation has ever done? "The love of Christ *constraineth* us." But *why* did it constrain him, and to do what? "It constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead;" i. e. it constrains us, because, when we were dead in trespasses and sins, Christ died to redeem us. What follows? He died for us, "that they which live, *should henceforth no more live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and who rose again.*" Preach the same doctrine; it must forever have the same influence—the same mighty, overpowering, saving influence—on every heart that receives it. Proclaim to a perishing world *glad tidings*—glad tidings of great joy. Jesus died for them. Jesus can and will save them, if they accept the offers of his mercy. *Glory in nothing but his cross.* Be not turned aside from preaching him *crucified*, by any scorn and contumely on the one hand, or cold and speculative philosophy on the other. This doctrine is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe. Proclaim it then to a world perishing in iniquity. Proclaim it to the very ends of the earth. It will force open the prison doors. It will liberate the captives. It will scatter

heavenly glory over our benighted world. It will call the dead to life. It will convert this great Aceldama into the garden of God. This boundless valley of dry bones will become the scene of as boundless a resurrection to life.

I thank God, whose providence has so long detained me from this sacred place,* that I have now enjoyed another opportunity of testifying to you my convictions in respect to a Saviour's dying love. If I should never again be permitted to do it, receive this as the last and highest expression of my affection to him and to you. I ask for no other privilege on earth, but to make known the efficacy of his death; and none in heaven, but to be associated with those who ascribe salvation to his blood. AMEN.

* For some time, previously to the composition and delivery of these Discourses, the writer of them had been prevented, by long continued infirmity, from the delivery of Sermons in the pulpit.

THE LAMB OF GOD.

[The following Sermon was delivered in the Chapel of the Andover Theol. Seminary, on the last Sabbath of the Winter Term of 1846. The Students made a request that I would publish it, by including it in the little volume which they had learned I was about to republish. I hesitated, for a while, about complying with their request; because I was afraid that this Discourse might be deemed a repetition, in some measure at least, of the preceding ones. It was composed and delivered, without any reference to publication. On a review of the subject, it has seemed to me, that the former discourses stand related to this, as a *whole* does to a *part*. They discuss the subject *generically;* the following Discourse, in a *specific* manner, and in reference to an important and controverted text of Scripture. What led to the composition of the latter was, the reading of *F. Lücke's Commentary* upon the text, who has expended much effort and ingenuity in order to show, that the expiatory death of Christ and redemption by it are not brought into prominent view, by the passage in question. Having myself formed a different opinion, I have endeavoured, in the following discourse, to give my reasons for it. I have preferred to do this in an *exegetical* way; believing fully that this method of preaching is occasionally of great importance, and has a powerful tendency to excite in Christians an active spirit of inquiry respecting the meaning of Scripture. At any rate, this mode of preaching conducts us immediately to the fountain-head of all true doctrine.

In respect to *repetition* of things already said, the reader must expect somewhat of this nature with regard to certain particulars. My audience were almost entirely different, when this last Sermon was delivered, from my former one, and knew little or nothing of my two former Discourses on the Atonement. To them, therefore, nothing in the following Discourse wore even the appearance of repetition. In publishing it, I should like to avoid this appearance in the view of readers at the present time, if it were feasible; but I find that I cannnot do this without tearing the discourse asunder, and reducing it to a fragmentary state. Changes in it therefore I have not made, excepting a few mere verbal alterations. Discourses of such a nature, designed for popular assemblies, are often injured by filing away and polishing. I have undertaken nothing of the sort, on the present occasion. A good reason for it is, that I did not wish to change the phase of the Discourse, so as to make it different from that which interested my audience, or from a *popular* discourse on an occasion of *Communion-Service*. My audience, however, was composed of *Students;* and this will account for the use of a few expressions and allusions, that I should have changed or omitted, before another and different audience. I now retain these, for reasons of the same nature as those above stated.—M. S.]

SERMON.

JOHN I. 29.

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD!*

SEVERAL inquiries naturally present themselves to our minds, on reading such a declaration as this. *By whom was it first made? On what occasion? And what is the exact meaning which it was designed to convey?*

It was made by *John the Baptist*, the announcing herald and forerunner of the true Messiah. The birth of this personage was foretold by an angel. In some respects it was supernatural. The character of John was an extraordinary one. Our Saviour says of him, that "he was more than a prophet;" and that "among those born of woman, a greater than John the Baptist had not arisen;" (Matt. 11: 7—11). It is a *moral* greatness, beyond a doubt, to which this declaration of the Saviour specially refers; but on other grounds it would be easy to vindicate a high rank for John. Of all the prophets, he only was the immediate forerunner of Christ; and he only was exclusively charged with the duty of announcing the immediate appearance of the promised Messiah. To him only was it vouchsafed to make a change in the tenor of the Mosaic religion, and to baptize into a new and preparatory dispensation. The persons, who by their office are nearest to the king, in respect to his royal acts, are of course his highest officers. And such was the place of John.

His character was of the order of Elijah, and Elisha, and Isaiah. He was a fearless and uncompromising reformer.

* Preached on the occasion of administering the Lord's Supper.

Withal, strange as it may seem to us, he was exceedingly popular among the Jews. The secret of this undoubtedly is, that he announced the Messiah as immediately coming, under whose reign the whole Jewish nation were then expecting deliverance from a foreign yoke, and an elevated rank among the nations of the earth. Panting with strong desire for the attainment of both these objects, multitudes flocked to John from all parts of Judea. "All Judea and Jerusalem," says the evangelist, "went out to John in order that they might be baptized." Among them went Jesus himself, now about thirty years of age.

This leads us easily to answer our second question, viz. *On what occasion were the words of our text uttered?*

They were spoken in presence of that immense multitude who surrounded John, and were addressed to them. They were spoken the *next day* after John had baptized Jesus in the presence of all the people who flocked to him; they were uttered, of course, after the multitudes who were there had seen the Holy Spirit descending from heaven as a dove, and resting upon Jesus; and after a voice from Heaven had proclaimed: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

John was now near the completion of his work. Jesus was thenceforth to enter on his official duties, and to set up that kingdom which John had so often announced. In this state of things, John introduced to the multitudes around him the exalted personage, whom he had by baptism consecrated to his holy office. Only a single sentence from his introductory speech has been recorded; but that comprises, one may well say, the substance of a long discourse: "BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD!"

This brings us, in the third place, *to inquire into the exact meaning of such an annunciation.*

If John, as we believe, was commissioned by heaven to introduce the Messiah to the Jews, we must regard the declaration by which he performs this duty, as containing *truth*, and

nothing but truth. To no prophet or priest, except to the Messiah, had been conceded the honour and the privilege of having a forerunner or herald to prepare the way for his appearance. Yet John, who was greater than all that had preceded him, considers himself as entitled to no higher place than that of a menial servant, in comparison with the elevated rank of Christ, and most readily acknowledges the claims of the newly baptized Saviour to the honour, homage, confidence, and obedience of all men. Not only had no prophet, no priest, no king, before Jesus of Nazareth, ever been introduced to the Jewish people in such a manner ; but it never had been announced concerning any one of them, that he was to remove or take away the sins of even the Jewish nation, much less the sins of the whole world. A sacrifice of a more exalted nature and of greater efficacy than any which had been presented, or could be offered by them, was needed in order to purify the conscience from dead works, and to fit the offerer for an acceptable service of the living God.

John had often and most earnestly urged upon the Jews the duty of *repentance*, and assured them that nothing short of this could prepare them for the due reception of the Messiah. Now, when Jesus makes his appearance in order to enter upon the duties of his station, John discloses to them the great object which is to be accomplished by him. The pardon of sin—the removal of both the penalty and the power of sin—was that object. Mere *repentance*, important as it was and is, can never of itself remove the penalty of a broken law. It does not atone for sins already committed ; it only prepares the penitent to avoid transgression for the future, by inspiring a hatred of sin, as well as a sorrow for it. John did not tell the Jews, that if they repented they would be forgiven because of their repentance. He urged repentance upon them, as the indispensable condition of being made partakers of the blessings which Christ was to bestow. When he had done all that he was commissioned to do, after he had baptized and exhorted to immediate repentance, he publicly and solemnly announces to all his converts, and to the world, that

they are "to look to the Lamb of God, in order that their sins might be taken away."

But *who* or *what* is the *Lamb of God?* Why does John give to Jesus such an appellation?

I know of but two lights in which this matter can be viewed. The *literal* sense is out of all question, in this case, because the appellation is given to a *person*, and a lamb in a literal sense is not a *person*. Of course the word *lamb* involves a comparison or simile. There are two ways, now, in which a comparison may be made; the one has respect merely to disposition or character; the other has its basis in the fact, that *lambs* were so extensively employed, and on the most important occasions, as propitiatory or sin-offerings, under the ancient dispensation.

As to the first source of comparison, innocence, meekness, and unresisting submission to harsh treatment, are characteristic in an eminent degree of a *lamb*. It is, even among us, one of our most familiar and forcible images, employed to designate a combination of such attributes or virtues. It is possible, I admit, that John might apply the appellation of *lamb* to Jesus, in order to indicate that such characteristics as I have just named, belonged in a peculiar manner to him. So had Isaiah done before him: "He is brought as a *lamb* to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth;" (Is. 53: 7). Had the object of John been merely to set forth the meek and patient virtues of Jesus amidst persecutions and sufferings, he doubtless might have spoken of him as a *lamb*, and with much significancy. But how would such a view of his words agree with the rest of our text? He is not merely a *lamb*—but "a Lamb of God;" and not only so, but "he takes away the sin of the world." Now the fact that Jesus was innocent, and meek, and mild, and patient, and unresisting when forced to suffering, is connected, when considered by itself, in no intelligible manner with *taking away the sin* of the world. There were doubtless many pious persons in that assembly which John ad-

dressed, who were in a good degree of the same meek and patient character, and might be called, as Jesus calls his true followers, *lambs* of his Father's flock. But this did not make them *saviours* of the world from sin. If Jesus was perfectly innocent, and meek, and unresisting—all this might help to form an elevated and very amiable character. It might qualify him to be an excellent prophet and teacher. But if he is mainly referred to, in this character, by the text before us, then how can we help the feeling that John has been unfortunate in the choice of his metaphorical language? In respect to the announcement of a *teacher* or *prophet* we should expect to hear something indicative of acuteness and wisdom and eloquence. If John means to designate an accomplished teacher, we are prepared to hear him call Jesus a *light*, a *sun*, a *guide*, or to describe him by some other similar appellation. But to choose a *lamb* as the symbol of intelligence, wisdom, eloquence, power of instruction—is one of the last choices that we should expect any man to make. When the Saviour sends out his disciples to *teach*, he exhorts them to "be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." We understand this at once. But if John the Baptist meant to characterize Christ, as "taking away the sins of the world" merely by his sagacious and discriminating instruction, he has made choice of a word which does not in the remotest manner convey to our minds any image of this sort. The *rhetorical* argument from this passage is therefore invincibly against such a supposition.

The *moral* argument is still stronger. If Jesus as an *instructor* is only, or principally, the Saviour of the world, why have not Paul, and other apostles, and evangelists, and prophets, yea, and all preachers of the gospel too, the same reason to be called the *saviours* of men? Let it be that Jesus had a preëminence and higher qualifications; yet their work and office is the same in kind as his. Nay, I may go still further: If the light actually diffused abroad over the world, is the principal means and the measure of taking away sin, then Paul has a higher claim to be called *Saviour*, than Jesus of Nazareth; for he taught much longer, far more widely, had

more success, and has left on record the most important instruction we now have respecting the nature of the Christian system.

On both grounds, then, viz. on that of rhetorical propriety, and on that of the great moral object to be accomplished by Christ, the interpretation of *Lamb* in our text as a mere symbol or indication of *personal character*, or of *didactic powers*, is out of all reasonable question.

We are of necessity thrown, then, upon the other figurative or symbolic meaning of the word *lamb*, viz. AN ATONING OR PROPITIATORY SACRIFICE, BY WHICH THE PARDON OF SIN IS SECURED, or (to use the language of the text) "the sins of the world are taken away."

Nothing could be more easy and natural, than for a Jew to employ the word in such a sense. What was that victim, whose blood, sprinkled on the door-posts of the Hebrew habitations in Egypt, was a sign to the destroying angel that he must pass by, and leave the inmates of the dwelling unharmed, while every Egyptian's house was mourning the death of a first born? The victim which furnished that blood was a *lamb*. Lambs were to be ever employed as victims, at the great feast of the passover. They were extensively employed in other sacrifices, and on occasions of great solemnity. Being less expensive victims than bullocks, the great legislator of the Jews enjoined an extensive use of them by the people, so that the poorer classes might thus participate in the offerings which were legally to be made.

No one can wonder, then, that a Jew, who regarded Christ in the light in which Isaiah has placed him, viz. as "wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities," should call him a *Lamb*. See how familiarly Paul speaks, in regard to this matter: "Purge out," says he to the Corinthians, "the old leaven." Every Jew of course would spontaneously feel the reference in this command to the leavened bread which was to be put away, at the feast of the passover. But the apostle does not stop with this. He goes on to assign a reason for his command, in language equally plain and signifi-

cant: "For even Christ, *our passover*," i. e. our passover-lamb, "is sacrificed for us," (1 Cor. 5: 7). Peter shows that the same idea is familiar to him: "Ye were redeemed," says he to the Christians whom he is addressing, "not with corruptible things, ... but with the precious blood of Christ, a *lamb* without blemish and without spot;" (1 Pet. 1: 18, 19. Ex. 12: 5). That apostle who leaned on the bosom of Jesus, and who has recorded the words of John the Baptist which constitute our text, seems to have imbibed, in an unusual measure, the spirit which led to the employment of such language as I have repeated. Rapt into celestial vision, he beheld the throne of God, supported by four living creatures, and surrounded by the twenty-four elders. "In the midst of them," i. e. between the circling elders and the throne, "I saw," says he, "a LAMB, as it had been *slain*, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God." That Lamb advances to the throne, and takes the book with seven seals out of the hand of him who sat upon that throne, in order that he might break the seals and disclose the contents of that book. But how are the heavenly spectators affected by this? Every one falls prostrate before the *Lamb*, and all unite in singing the new song: "Thou wast *slain*, and hast redeemed us to God by thy BLOOD, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation." All heaven respond to this. They shout aloud: "Worthy is the LAMB, that was *slain*, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing." The whole universe reëchoes back this song: "Blessing and honour, and glory and power, be unto him who sitteth on the throne, and to the LAMB forever and ever!" (Rev. 5: 8—14). This settles the question, as to what views were connected with the word *lamb*, as applied to Christ. It is a *lamb* which is *slain*; a lamb whose blood has a *redeeming* efficacy; even as Paul has often asserted that we "have redemption by the blood of Christ." And although John has elsewhere in the Apocalypse presented the Lamb to our view, as "King of kings and Lord of lords," yet there is nothing in this which is at

all at variance with his other view of the subject. One thing lies upon the face of these passages; which is, that the highest elevation of heavenly rapture and song is always reached, whenever Christ presents himself as a *Lamb that had been slain.*

May I not safely venture to assert, now, not only that John the Baptist *might* have meant to call Jesus a *Lamb*, because he was to be an expiatory victim, but that, according to rhetorical propriety, and the Jewish usages of speech, he *must* have meant to convey such an idea? I do not believe, that we can rationally suppose the Jews, who encircled the herald of Jesus' approach, would ever have thought of any other meaning of John's words than this. And could John fail to know this? And why should we suppose him to have employed mystical or equivocal language, on an occasion so solemn and important?

But if any doubt remains on the mind of any one who hears me, in regard to this point, it will all be removed, as it seems to me, when we advance in the farther explanation of our text.

Jesus is not only a lamb, but THE LAMB OF GOD. Here is superadded, in the way of explanation, a new relation or quality of the Lamb in question. It is barely possible, that *lamb of God* may mean *most excellent lamb;* as *mountains of God* are said to mean very high mountains, and *the child Moses was fair to God* is said to mean that he was exceedingly fair. Time has been, when these idioms were thus interpreted; but the idea of making a mere superlative out of the name of God, is now generally abandoned by the best critics, and the words *of God* are admitted to be indicative of some special relation to God. Accordingly, in the text before us, the *Lamb of God* must either mean *the Lamb which belongs to God*, or else *the Lamb which God provides.* The Lamb which *belongs* to God would make an inept and frigid meaning, in the case before us. The main design of John the Baptist is to show in what relation Jesus stands to those whom he addresses, not to show to whom the Lamb appertains as prop-

erty. It follows, then, that the meaning must be: The Lamb which God has provided, or which he presents as a sin-offering. Every Jew, in his own case and on account of his own sin, was obliged by the Mosaic law to provide, and present as a sacrifice for sin, a lamb without spot or blemish. What each had thus done for himself, God now does for the Jews and for all men. He provides a spotless victim, who through the eternal Spirit was to offer up himself as a sacrifice to God, and thus procure eternal redemption for all.

Mark, my hearers, what expanded views the forerunner of Jesus had, in regard to the nature and extent of Christ's mission. He was first of all a *lamb*, i. e. a propitiatory or vicarious sacrifice; then, secondly, he was a lamb presented by no mere man who was himself a sinner, but provided by God himself; and of course, thirdly, we may accede to the remaining part of the declaration: *Which taketh away the sins of the world.* In the language of the apostle John this phraseology imports, that the Lamb of God was to be a propitiatory sacrifice *for Gentiles as well as Jews.* The atonement of Christ, then, its efficacy, and its universality, are all plainly within the scope of John the Baptist's view.

This brings us to the last declaration of our text: *Which taketh away the sin of the world.*

What is it to *take away* sin? The Greek words (*αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν*) are not of the classical idiom, but are simply Hebrew in Greek costume. The Hebrews employed the phrase (נָשָׂא עָוֹן) as meaning either to bear the punishment or consequences of sin, or to expiate sin, or to forgive sin. Either of the two first meanings will answer well for our text, for Christ "*bore* our sins and carried our sorrows; he bore our sins in his own body on the tree (1 Pet. 2: 24); he was made a curse for us (Gal. 3: 13); he was made sin, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," (2 Cor. 5: 21). One might vindicate this shade of meaning, also, by appealing to the lamb as a *sacrificial* victim, which bore suffering in the room of him who presented the offering. Substantially, too, this meaning at-

tached to the phrase would communicate to us the idea of Christ as an *atoning sacrifice*. But I doubt not that the other shade of meaning conveyed by this Hebrew phraseology, is the true idea of the passage before us. The Lamb that *takes away* the sins of the world, is the Lamb that *makes expiation* for them, and thus removes their condemning and soul-destroying power. The Greek verb translated *taketh away* (αἴρω), like the corresponding Hebrew one (נָשָׂא), means, first of all, *to lift up, elevate;* then to *raise up and remove*, as one lifts up a burden and then conveys it away. It is exceedingly significant in the passage under consideration. Christ took on him the burden of our sins, and this load he carried away or removed from us. *Figurative*, indeed, is the whole manner of expression. Figurative was it among the Jews, who spoke familiarly of their sacrificial victims as bearing the sins of the offerer, and taking them away. Over the head of the goat, which on the great day of expiation was sent into the wilderness, confession was made by the high-priest in behalf of all the people, while his hands were laid on the head of the goat, in order thus to signify that the sins of the people were symbolically transferred to the goat; and the same scape-goat is said to "bear all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited" (Lev. 16: 21 seq.), i. e. it took away their sins. The offender who offered a sacrifice in a manner prescribed by law, was *ecclesiastically* and *civilly* freed from the penalty of the law. The law adjudged the victim to have suffered in his room or stead.

No other meaning than one drawn from these familiar sources, will answer the demands of our text. All else falls far below it, or widely misses the mark. To say that Christ takes away the sins of the world by virtue of the *instruction* which he communicated as our great teacher, is true enough to a certain extent; but this idea by no means answers the exigencies of our text. A *lamb* is not the emblem of an instructor. When the evangelist wishes to convey his views of Christ as our great teacher, he calls him *the Light of the world;* he says that *in him was life*, and that life was the

light of men; he says that the Only Begotten of the Father has *declared* the purposes of God fully to us. Indeed it is quite plain, that entirely another mode of expression than that in our text must be adopted, in order intelligibly to convey the idea in question.

One word as to *taking away the sins of the* WORLD, and I have done with my main theme. Other conditions besides the expiatory death of Christ are necessary to complete the actual salvation of the sinner—conditions on *his* part, which are indispensable. He must be a penitent; he must believe and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as the only and all-sufficient Saviour of sinners. This done, salvation is as wide as the world of men. The proffer of it is universal; the provision for it on the part of God is all-sufficient. But the sinner must become united to Christ by faith, in order actually to avail himself of this provision.

Thus have I endeavoured to explain and vindicate this most important part of all the preaching or declarations of John the Baptist, which is left on sacred record. No one will deny that our subject has an intimate connection with the solemnities in which we are to engage this day; for to-day, (we may say with the apostle of old), *is Christ our passover sacrificed for us*. Or we may use the words of the same apostle on another occasion: "Christ Jesus is evidently set forth before us, as crucified among us."

Christians are you prepared for this sacred feast? Do you look by faith to that *Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world?* I would most affectionately and solemnly warn you, that it is necessary to *discern the Lord's body aright*, if we would escape condemnation when we come to this table; and surely so, if we would rationally expect to participate in the blessings which it indicates. What then is *discerning the Lord's body aright?* Would any one ever devise such an expression, in order to inculcate the necessity or the importance of recognizing Christ as our *instructor*, or as a *perfect model* of piety and virtue? "Not discerning the *Lord's* BODY aright." And is his *body* our teacher, and his

body our model of holiness and virtue?—No! good taste, propriety, as well as all that is awful and sacred in the death of Christ, revolts at such an interpretation. Peter has explained it: "Who his own self, in his *own body*, bare our sins upon the tree," (1 Pet. 2: 24). It is the discerning of that body, laden with our sins, suffering and dying under the weight of them, which we are called to, on an occasion like the present. My dear Christian friends, are you prepared to do this in a *spiritual* manner—in such a way as to feed by *faith* on the body and blood of an atoning Saviour? This is what is meant by "eating his flesh and drinking his blood." I reject—were not the occasion so sacred I would say—reject with scorn, all carnal and literal interpretation of this. How can the literal eating of flesh, and the literal drinking of human blood, purify and sanctify the *spirits* of men? It is a heathen conception. But there is a meaning in phraseology of this nature, which is transcendently excellent, and is refreshment to the soul. Paul felt what it was, when he said to the Corinthians: "I am determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and HIM CRUCIFIED." Paul acknowledged it, when he declared that he would "preach Christ *crucified*," and that "the preaching of the *cross* is the power of God unto salvation." Paul realized it in all its excellence, when he said to the Galatians: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the *cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Are you prepared my friends to sympathize with him—to enter fully into the meaning of his words? If you are, then may you this morning behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. I cannot, indeed, point you to his *bodily* presence, as John the Baptist did his hearers; but I am authorized to assure you, that the symbols of his body and of his blood, are not symbols of what has no existence and no reality. They are symbols of a *present* Christ. He is as really here to-day, as he was on the banks of the Jordan, when John announced him as the Lamb of God, to the wondering multitude. He will be at the head of our table, on this occasion, if we are ready to receive him. Faith can

see him there in all his meekness, and all his benignity, and all his majesty. Faith has an *ear* also to hear him address us and say: "Eat O friends; drink, O beloved!" "This is my body, which was broken for you; my blood, that was shed for the remission of sins." O Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, open our blind eyes to see thee in thy glory and in thy mercy! Unstop our deaf ears, that we may listen to the invitations of thy love to-day, and so hear that our souls may live! AMEN.

CHRISTIANITY A DISTINCT RELIGION.

[After having already apologized, at the beginning of the preceding Discourse, for the repetition of certain topics in respect to the *atonement* and *Godhead* of Christ, it would seem to be trespassing upon the patience and offending the taste of the reader, to insert another discourse here, which needs still more an apology of the like nature. If this volume consisted of one treatise or discussion only, it would be out of question thus to trespass upon my readers; who doubtless would, and not unnaturally, feel that I expected to be heard for much speaking, if they did not bring the more serious charge of using vain repetitions. All that I have to say is, that the discourses, when composed, were separated by years, and were delivered before different audiences and at various places, and could not therefore appear as repetitions to the auditors. They are in each case simple copies of thoughts familiar to my own mind, and not transcriptions of each other. My own taste and judgment would lead me to omit some of them in this little volume, in order to avoid the appearance of repetition. But I feel compelled to defer to the often repeated wishes of friends whom I love and respect, by inserting them all, without remodeling or substantial change. Each has its own peculiar attitude; and besides what is common to all, each is made up, for the most part, of what is peculiar to itself. The preceding sacramental Sermon is a purely *exegetical* discourse. The Sermon which now follows, brings to view an attitude of Christianity, which never can be made too much of. If we wish to know whether we are really *Christians;* or whether others who claim this honourable name are entitled to it; we must first know what Christianity is, in distinction from all else that is called religion. This great question I have endeavoured to answer. In so doing, it was impossible for me not to say some things, that the reader has already met with in the preceding pages. I hope, however, for his indulgence, in these circumstances, and that he will not accuse me of merely copying from myself, or of making up a book of repetitions to no purpose.—M. S.]

SERMON.

MATT. XVIII. 20.

FOR WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED TOGETHER IN MY NAME, THERE AM I IN THE MIDST OF THEM.*

SUCH was the declaration of the Saviour to his apostles. He had been giving them directions with regard to the mode of exercising discipline in the church, and had promised them special assistance in the discharge of this duty, when he uttered the words of our text. He had told them, that when two of their number should be agreed on earth, respecting anything which they would ask, it should be done for them by his Father in heaven. On this, he assured them, they might rely; since no such request could escape his notice, or fail of attracting his aid. *Wherever two or three are met together*, said he, *in my name, there am I in the midst of them;* consequently the apostles could not fail of obtaining that aid which he had promised.

Although these words had a particular reference, when they were first spoken, to the apostles, and were intended to satisfy their minds respecting the assistance which their Lord and Master would give them, while employed in his service; yet, as there is nothing in the nature of the case which necessarily limits them to the apostles only, I shall consider them as addressed to Christians of every age, and applicable to all who convene in the name of Christ. Not that a promise of *miraculous* aid is to be extended to all who are convened as the disciples of Christ; not that everything for

* Preached at the Dedication of the Church in Hanover Street, Boston, March 1, 1826.

which they now ask will be specifically granted, as it was to those who had a miraculous faith, and who asked for various things under special supernatural guidance. The application of our text to Christians of every age, does not necessarily involve this. The assurance of Christ to the apostles, that whatever any two should agree in asking for, should be bestowed upon them, is grounded not on the fact that he would be specially present, and present only with them as *apostles*, but on the fact, that wherever his *disciples* might convene he would be present. It involves a general promise, that they who should be his sincere friends and faithful ministers of the gospel, should enjoy his presence and aid. It is a promise of a nature similar to that which the Saviour made at the moment of his ascension: "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."[1] This was addressed to the apostles; and was designed in a peculiar manner to cheer their drooping spirits, and animate them in the great work which they were about to undertake. But who will say, that it must be confined solely to them? Were they to continue to the end of the world? If not, then Christians in general, or at least the ministers of the divine word in general, down to the end of time, are meant to be included.

This may suffice to show, that our text can be properly adduced at the present day, and on this occasion, as applicable to an assembly of worshippers convened in the name of Christ.

If so, we may now proceed to inquire:

I. What is it for an assembly of men to convene in the name of Christ?

II. What is implied in the declaration that he is in the midst of them?

Our English translation of the verse, which I have chosen as my text, hardly conveys to the common reader of our language the force of the original Greek. Such a reader would naturally suppose, that the phrase *in my name means, by the*

[1] Matt. 28: 20.

authority or command of Christ; as we speak of anything being done in the name of the king, or in the name of the commonwealth. But this would be an entire misconception of the meaning of the passage before us. In the Hebrew language of the Old Testament, and in the Greek of the New, which very frequently (as might naturally be expected) imitates it closely, the word *name* is often employed only as a kind of periphrasis or circumlocution, in order to express *him, himself*, i. e. the person to whom the word *name* refers. Thus the Hebrews say: *Let the name of God be honoured!* instead of simply saying: *Let God be honoured!* God says: *I will reveal my name*, instead of *I will reveal myself.* So our Saviour says, in the prayer which we familiarly call the Lord's Prayer: *Hallowed be thy name;* which means, *Be thou held in reverence*, or *adored.*

From this very common usage in the Hebrew tongue it comes, that in the New Testament such phrases as *for thy name's sake, on account of thy name*, often mean nothing more than *for thy sake, on thy account.* For example: *Ye shall be hated of all men . . . . . for my name's sake*, i. e. for my sake.[1] *All these things shall they do to you . . . . . on account of my name*, i. e. on account of me.[2] *Whoever shall forsake his family and friends . . . . . for my name's sake*, i. e. on account of me.[3] *Whatever ye shall ask in my name*, i. e. on account of me, for the sake of my cause.[4] *The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name*, i. e. on account of me, or for the sake of my cause.[5] *If ye are reproached for the name of Christ*, i. e. on account of him, because ye are Christians.[6] *Whoever shall receive a little child in my name*, i. e. on my account.[7]

It were easy to add many more examples of the same nature, but I forbear. I have produced these, merely to show that I do not hazard anything in asserting the sentiment of our text to be this: *Where two or three are convened on my*

[1] Matt. 10: 22.
[2] John 15: 21.
[3] Matt. 19: 29.
[4] John 14: 13, 14.
[5] John 14: 26.
[6] 1 Pet. 4: 14.
[7] Luke 9: 48.

account, for my sake, because of me. The original Greek (εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα) can scarcely admit of any other construction.

To meet together on account of Christ, is to convene as his disciples; as having a common interest in him; and as possessing characteristics which distinguish those who do thus convene from other men, i. e. from the world around them.

Men may convene for a great variety of purposes, either of business or of pleasure. But it will not be affirmed that all conventions of this sort are for the sake of Christ. Nay, men may meet together for acts of religious worship, and yet not convene for the sake of Christ. Sober theists like Lord Herbert, Jews, Mohammedans, nay idolaters, may meet together for the sake of social worship; but they come not together *in the name of Christ;* nor has he promised to be in the midst of such assemblies.

There is something, then, which must distinguish the *Christian* worshipper from all others; something which makes him what he professes to be, *a Christian*, in distinction from an unbeliever, a heathen or polytheist, a deist or naturalist, a Jew, or a Mohammedan. Like every other religion received by men, Christianity has, and must have, some distinctive traits of its own which make it what it is; which make it *Christianity* rather than Deism, or Judaism, or Islamism. The disciples of Christ, his true disciples, must of course recognize these traits. If there be doctrines and duties of Christianity which differ from those of all other religions, then they who are the genuine followers of Christ, and real converts to his religion, must receive those doctrines, and practise those duties. Nor can any be truly said to meet together in the name of Christ, or as his disciples, who do not admit the one, and practise the other.

Surely a man could not, with any propriety, be called a Mohammedan, who should refuse to receive the Koran, and to practise the rites and duties which it enjoins; nor could he be called a Jew, who should reject the Pentateuch, and the peculiarities of the Jewish institutions. It cannot be any

more proper, then, to consider men as real Christians, or to call an assembly convened for the purposes of worship, *Christians*, provided they reject the peculiarities of the Christian religion which make it what it is, viz. *Christianity* in distinction from all other religions.

What then is it to come together as *Christians?* What are those distinctive traits of belief or character, which separate Christians from all other worshippers; make them the subject of that promise which our text contains; and give them, therefore, the assurance that Christ will be present when they worship as his disciples?

Christianity does not differ, as to every doctrine which it teaches, and every duty which it prescribes, from all other systems of religion. The better part even of pagans admitted some of the doctrines which our religion inculcates. Many of the moral duties, for example, were taught with no small degree of force and perspicuity by Socrates, Plato, Epictetus, Plutarch, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, and others. The light of nature did much for such men; and the doctrines which they taught, and the duties which they inculcated, so far as they were guided by that light, were altogether accordant with those which Christianity teaches and enjoins.

But the difference, after all, is so wide between Christianity and any of the various systems of idolatry and polytheism, that I do not think it worth a moment's delay, on the present occasion, to show that a worshipper under the Gospel is of a very different complexion from one who either bows down to images which his own hands have made, or worships the host of heaven, or prostrates himself before heroes and conquerors, whom superstition has exalted to heaven and ranked among the objects of human adoration.

Very different from all these, and at a great advance beyond them, is the considerate theist or naturalist of modern times, the Jew, and the Mohammedan. These, I mean the sober and reasoning part of them, all unite in the belief, that there is one only living and true God, spiritual, eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, immutable, just, wise, good,

merciful, and faithful; the creator, preserver, and governor of all things; and the proper object of religious worship by all the creatures which he has made. They all agree, that man is a rational, accountable, immortal being, placed in a state of moral probation; and that there is a future world, a judgment to come, a state of punishment for the wicked, and of reward for the righteous. They all agree, that God is the proper object of prayer, and of secret and social worship; they assert the obligation of men to repent of their sins, and to forsake them; and they unite in a full acknowledgment of nearly all the moral duties which the gospel enjoins.

I have said that the sober theist admits all this; and I might appeal to the works of Lord Herbert, Tindal, and others of past times; of Kant and Eberhard, of recent memory; or to various writers of the present time, in proof of this proposition, were any disposed to doubt it. I presume, however, that none who hear me will doubt it. If then the naturalist, who rejects all revelation, and denies all supernatural intercourse between God and his creatures, admits thus much; we might well expect that the Jew, with the Old Testament in his hands, would go still farther. This is in fact the case; for he admits the authority of the Old Testament; the inspiration of Moses and the prophets; that there is a Messiah to come; and that God is not only to be worshipped by a life of prayer and the practice of social virtues and moral duties, but to be worshipped in the particular manner pointed out in the Old Testament, so often as this may be possible.

The Mohammedan goes still farther, in the theory of his faith. He admits both revelations; that in ancient, and that in later days; that by Moses and the prophets, and that by Jesus Christ. He admits them to have been of divine authority, and still to be substantially so. But all that is essential in them, he believes is comprehended in the Koran; which, in his view, is the last and most perfect of all divine revelations.

How then does the disciple of Jesus differ from these various religionists? Not in the belief of one God; not in main-

taining the perfection of all his natural and moral attributes; not in regarding him as the creator, preserver, and governor of the universe; not in the belief that we are rational, accountable, immortal beings; that there is a judgment to come; that there is a future world of happiness, and another of wo, in one of which men will be placed, according to the character which they sustain in their probationary state; not in the belief that God is the proper object of prayer, and of private and social worship; not in admitting the obligation to inculcate and practise all the social and moral virtues. So far as all these truths are concerned, the Christian occupies ground in common with the naturalist, the Jew, and the Mohammedan. Why is he then a *Christian*, and not a Theist, nor a Jew, nor a Mohammedan? Plainly because he admits some other doctrines, and practises some duties, that are *peculiar to Christianity*, and which exclude the peculiarities of the other systems of religion, that give names to their respective votaries. When Christians assemble, then, as the disciples of Christ, in a manner that comports with the name which they bear, they assemble as possessed of some peculiar traits of character, which distinguish them from all other worshippers. They meet together, indeed, to acknowledge and adore one only living and true God, possessed of all possible natural and moral perfections; as immortal beings; as probationers for eternity; as believing in a judgment to come, and in the rewards and punishments of the invisible world. They meet together, acknowledging and inculcating the moral and social duties, and believing them indispensable in order to secure divine approbation. Thus far they go, in common with the Rationalist, the Jew, and the Mohammedan. But the difference between these religionists and Christians, lies in something that is superadded to all this; something which they only admit, and must admit and practise, in order to be *Christians*.

What then are the peculiarities which distinguish them, and which render it proper to say of them that they meet *in the name of Christ*, or on account of him? A very interest-

ing and a very delicate question; one which, however, my text leads me to make an attempt briefly to answer. If I am not fully, I am at least in some good measure, aware of the responsibility and the difficulty of the case. But I am not going to dogmatize. I shall appeal to no councils; no fathers; no creeds; no catechisms; no works of the schoolmen; no labours of acute and metaphysical divines; in a word, to no human system whatever. All—all—of these are made by frail erring men. They are not of any *binding authority;* and we have a warrant that is sufficient, not to receive them, or any of them, as possessing *such* authority. I advert to the warning of our Saviour, which bids us *call no man master upon earth*; *for there is one who is our master, that dwelleth in heaven.*

To the law and to the testimony. What we find there, we may rely upon. All else is uncertain; to say the least, it is exposed to error.

Will you allow me then, my friends, to make such an appeal as I have now described? Instead of striving to please your fancy, by presenting you with fine imagery and poetic pictures, or with ingenious and subtle disquisition, or with speculation which might amuse and pleasantly beguile away an hour, will you permit me to carry you along with me over various parts of the New Testament, the record and statute-book of our holy religion, and see what the Saviour himself, his apostles, and the teachers inspired by him, have taught us respecting the peculiar and distinguishing characteristics of real Christians? While you, my brethren, who are to convene in this house, expect to meet together to worship God, and inculcate the duties of morality, at least as much as others do who bear not the Christian name; you expect also to come here in the *name of Christ*, and as his disciples. You intend to *profess* and to *do* not only more than the pagan, but more than the naturalist, or the Jew, or the Mohammedan. I shall not attempt, within the brief limits assigned to this discourse, even to glance at *all* the peculiarities of the Christian system, which as the disciples of Christ you are bound to main-

tain. The most that I can do, is merely to present a few particulars, which are prominent among the characteristics that distinguish the Christian religion from all others. More than this cannot be reasonably expected, from an occasion like the present. I observe then,

(1) You who are here to meet together in the name of Christ, *must believe and trust in him as the true Messiah, the Son of God, and the only Saviour of sinners.*

Thus Jesus himself commissioned his apostles to declare: *Go . . . . preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth . . . . shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*[1] But what is it to be saved? Another Scripture has answered the question: *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life,* i. e. happiness. What is it to be damned? This inquiry also is answered: *He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*[2] Again: *He that believeth on him, is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he does not believe on the name of the only begotten Son of God.*[3] Thus said the Saviour, on another occasion, to the Jews: *If ye believe not that I am He,* (that is, the Messiah), *ye shall die in your sins;*[4] in other words, remission of the penalty you have incurred, or pardon for sin, can be obtained only through such a belief. John tells us, that the object of writing his Gospel was to persuade men to *believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing they might have life through him.*[5] He tells us again in his epistle, that *he who believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; but he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.* What was that record? He proceeds to inform us: *This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son.*[6] What follows? *He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*[7]

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[1] Mark 16: 15, 16.
[2] John 3: 36.
[3] John 3: 18.
[4] John 8: 24.
[5] John 20: 31.
[6] 1 John 5: 10, 11.
[7] 1 John 5: 12.

In full accordance with this, when the trembling jailer prostrated himself before Paul and Silas, and said: Sirs, what must I do to be saved? they answered: *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*[1]

But is there no other way of salvation? May we not be safe, if we adhere to some other prophet, some other system of religion? No; not if Peter is to be credited, who declared to the persecuting Jews: *There is salvation in none other; for there is none other name given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved.*[2] The claims of the Saviour then are supreme, are exclusive; they admit of no rival with him. The Gospel teaches that there is but one true religion; one right way to heaven; one Saviour of sinners. If before the Saviour came *God winked at the times of ignorance*, he no longer does so where that Saviour is proclaimed. *He now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.*[3]

But *why* are we to believe and trust in the Son of God, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world? Because he is the Saviour, and only Saviour of sinners. *His name was called Jesus, because he was to save his people from their sins*, i. e. from the power and penalty of sin.[4] But how *save* them? Merely by instruction? By example? If he be a Saviour merely because he instructed the people; then has Paul a better title to that name than he. Jesus wrote no part of our Scriptures; Paul wrote the most instructive parts of all. Jesus never travelled beyond the boundaries of Palestine; he made but few converts to his religion: Paul travelled almost the world over; converted many thousands; and built up a multitude of churches. Yet Paul does not claim the honour of being the Saviour of men; neither do other Christians, his fellow men and cotemporaries, highly as they value him and his labours, attribute it to him.

Was Jesus an example of virtue? So was Paul. That Jesus was more spotless, does not render his example more

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[1] Acts 16: 31. [2] Acts 4: 12. [3] Acts 17: 30. [4] Matt. 1: 21.

imitable by us. If we can come up to Paul's standard, our salvation is at least secure. Did Jesus die, to seal by his blood the truths of the holy religion which he taught? So did Paul. Did he exhibit the highest conviction of those truths which he taught, by unshaken attachment to them, amid every kind of persecution, suffering, and trial? So did Paul. Did he work miracles, in confirmation of them? So did Paul. Was he a divinely commissioned instructor? So was Paul. Was he taught of God, as to the doctrines which he preached? So was Paul. Nay more; Paul was caught up into the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not proper for man to utter; but this is nowhere said of Jesus. What then did Jesus perform, which Paul did not? In the office and duty of an instructor, a martyr, a prophet, a worker of miracles, a divinely commissioned messenger, a successful reformer, simply considered as such, Paul was in almost all respects equal, in many respects superior, to him. Why is not Paul then—Paul the great apostle of the Gentiles to whom we belong—our exalted benefactor to whom we owe an eternal debt of gratitude? Why is not he to be hailed as our Saviour? Why are we not to meet together *in his name?*

Ah, my brethren, it is because *there is only* ONE *name given under heaven, whereby we can be saved.*[1] Only one has made atonement for sin by his death, and brought in everlasting redemption for us. This Paul did not; Peter did not; James did not. They all were martyrs to the cause of truth. They sealed their testimony with blood. But it was only the blood of Abel, and not that which "speaketh *better* things." But Jesus *was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace* [i. e. by which our peace is procured] *was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. . . . The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*[2] When he made his first appearance before the multitudes, assembled on the banks of the Jordan in

[1] Acts 4: 12. [2] Is. 53: 5, 6.

order to be baptized by his forerunner John, he was proclaimed to them by this inspired herald, as *the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world.*[1] But a Lamb is not an instructor, nor an example of piety; a lamb is a *sacrifice*, a *propitiatory offering.*

When Christians look to Jesus as their Saviour, and *only* Saviour, they must consider him as Peter did; who tells us that *he, his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree . . . . and that by his stripes we are healed.*[2] They must believe with this same apostle, that *we have not been redeemed with corruptible things, as with silver and gold . . . . but by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*[3] This is that LAMB OF GOD, my friends, to which John the Baptist pointed his followers; that Lamb which by its blood was to redeem perishing sinners.

Christians, who are to worship here in the name of Christ, you must believe with Paul, that *we have redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins.*[4] Paul says, too, that *while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, ...* and that *we are now justified by his blood;* that *when we were enemies to God, we were reconciled to him by the death of his Son.*[5] He says, also, that *Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;*[6] and that if the blood of bulls and goats served the purpose of external purification, *how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God.*[7]

John too unites his testimony with that of other prophets and apostles. *Jesus Christ the righteous*, says he, is *the propitiation*, i. e. propitiatory sacrifice, *for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*[8] Again, *the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.*[9]

Such was Paul's conviction respecting this part of the

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[1] John 1: 29.
[2] 1 Pet. 2: 24.
[3] 1 Pet. 1: 18, 19.
[4] Col. 1: 14. Eph. 1: 7.
[5] Rom. 5: 8—10.
[6] Heb .9: 28.
[7] Heb. 9: 13, 14.
[8] 1 John 2: 1, 2.
[9] 1 John 1: 7.

Saviour's character and work, that he tells the Corinthians, *he is determined to know nothing among them, save Jesus Christ and him crucified;*[1] not Christ the prophet, the teacher, the perfect exemplar merely; but CHRIST CRUCIFIED. And though this doctrine was *to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks, foolishness,* yet he continued *to preach Christ crucified, the power of God, the wisdom of God, our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*[2] To the Galatians, who were inclined to glory in the rites of the Jewish dispensation, the same apostle says: *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*[3]

Thus preached and wrote apostles and martyrs, who were inspired of God. Thus you should believe and feel, my Christian brethren, when you meet together in this sacred place. And when you approach, here, the table of your Lord and master, in order to commemorate his dying love, then believe, when you see and taste the symbol of a Saviour's blood, that, as he told his disciples when this holy feast was instituted, *his blood of the New Testament was shed for many for the remission of sins.*[4]

Your thoughts, while you are convened in this sacred place, will often be directed to a brighter and better world. Thither you hope to go, and mingle your song with that of the blessed above. You will remember then, that they, in unison with prophets and apostles and all the redeemed of God on earth, sing: *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy* BLOOD, *out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*[5]

I will only add, that if, after all which you are taught respecting the atoning blood of a Saviour, you reject it, and renounce your hope and trust in it, you will subject yourselves to the awful sentence which an apostle has pronounced on all such: *If we sin wilfully, after that we have received*

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[1] 1 Cor. 2: 2.
[2] 1 Cor. 1: 23, 24, 30.
[3] Gal 6: 14.
[4] Matt. 26: 28.
[5] Rev. 5: 9.

the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace. For we know him that hath said: Vengeance is mine and I will recompense saith the Lord.[1]

If there is any one point, which widely distinguishes the Christian religion from all others, it is that on which I have now dwelt. No other religion presents you with a founder, who has made atonement for his followers by his own blood. Abraham did not; Moses did not; John the Baptist did not; Mohammed did not; none of the heathen even pretend to have done it. But *Christ with his own blood entered the sanctuary above, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*[2] Here then is a difference heaven-wide between the sincere follower of Jesus, who believes in him as such a Saviour, and the naturalist, the Jew, or the Mohammedan. Here is the fundamental principle in which Christianity differs from all else that is called religion. When you meet in the name of Christ, you must believe and acknowledge and feel these truths.—But,

(2) *Another characteristic of true Christianity is* LOVE TO CHRIST.

The true disciples of Christ will not only love him, but love him supremely, in comparison with every created being and object. So the Saviour himself demands: *If any man come unto me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*[3] Peter felt the flame of such love glowing in his bosom, when he wrote thus to the Jews in their dispersion respecting Christ: *Whom having not*

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[1] Heb. 10: 26—30. [2] Heb. 9: 11, 12. [3] Luke 14: 26.

seen, ye love; in whom, though you now see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;[1] and again: *Unto you who believe, he is precious.*[2] John also has told us, that *whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God;* and that *every one who loveth him that begat,* viz. the Father, *loveth him also that is begotten of him,* viz. the Son.[3]

From Paul we might expect the same testimony, drawn in glowing colours; and we are not disappointed. To the Ephesians he says: *Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ, in sincerity.*[4] The Colossians he exhorts *to seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God,* and goes on to say, that their *life is hid with Christ in God;* and that *when Christ, who is their life, shall appear, they also shall appear with him in glory.*[5] He tells the Philippians, that *he was in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.*[6] To the Corinthians he declares, that *the love of Christ constrains him,* viz. to labour and suffer, *because he thus judged, that if one died for all, then were all dead.*[7] And in closing his first epistle to them, such a sense had the apostle of obligation to love the Saviour, that he declares: *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema Maranatha,* i. e. accursed when the Lord shall come to judgment.[8]

If you say: 'All good men, all prophets and apostles, are to be loved and reverenced;' I concede it cheerfully. But the distinction between the love due to Christ and to them is, that the former is supreme. No created being or thing can come at all in competition with him.

'But are we to love the Son rather than the Father? Or more than we love the Father?' I answer: We are to love *the Father in him, and him in the Father.*[9] The Father has no jealousy in respect to any degree of love which we may

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[1] 1 Pet. 1: 8.
[2] 1 Pet. 2: 7.
[3] 1 John 5: 1.
[4] Eph. 6: 24.
[5] Col. 3: 1—4.
[6] Phil. 1: 23.
[7] 2 Cor. 5: 14.
[8] 1 Cor. 16: 22.
[9] John 14: 11.

bear to the Son. He himself has proclaimed him to us, as *his beloved and only Son, in whom he is well pleased.*[1]

But I deem it unnecessary to dilate on this topic. It is so plain a case, that Christians ought to love Christ, and love him ardently, sincerely, supremely, that I do not expect there will be any to gainsay it. Whether we consider Christ in respect to what he is, or to what he has done, he is deserving of our highest love and gratitude.

(3) Another peculiar trait of Christians, as drawn in the New Testament, is, that *they render religious homage to the Saviour.*

On this topic, as well as on others, I stand not in this sacred place to descant as a polemic. With human creeds or subtleties, or school distinctions and speculations, I have at present nothing to do. Creeds judiciously composed, supported by Scripture, and embracing essential doctrines only, may be useful as a symbol of common faith among churches. But they are not the *basis* of a Protestant's belief; nor should they be regarded as the *vouchers* for it. My object now is to inquire simply: What did the apostles and primitive disciples of the Lord and Saviour say and do, relative to the great subject before us? And the evidence of this shall be adduced merely from the sacred records.

I observe, then, that the primitive disciples did render to the Saviour *religious homage.* They made him the object of religious invocation. When the apostles were assembled at Jerusalem, for the first time after the Saviour's ascension to heaven, and were proceeding to elect another apostle in the room of Judas the traitor, they made invocation to the Saviour, and said: *Thou Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen.*[2] The time, the manner, the object of this prayer, and the appellation given to him who was addressed, all concur to show that the Saviour is here meant. Stephen, the expiring martyr, who was filled with the Holy Ghost, and on whom the very visions of God were

[1] Luke 3: 22. Matt. 3: 17.

[2] Acts 1: 24.

opening, with his last breath invoked the Saviour, and said: *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!*[1] Ananias, when bid by Christ to go and comfort the persecuting Saul who had been subdued by the power of the Saviour, says: *I have heard how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem; And here he hath authority from the chief priest, to bind all that invoke thy name.*[2] When the Christians in Judea heard of Saul's conversion, they said with amazement: *Is not this he who destroyed them which invoke this name*, i. e. the name of Christ, *in Jerusalem?*[3] In both these cases, *they who invoke the name of Christ*, i. e. call upon him in prayer, is familiarly used as a mere periphrasis for *Christians;* implying, of course, that they who were the disciples of Christ *habitually* invoked his name. Paul, in giving an account before the Jews of his conversion, relates that Ananias came to him and said: *Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, invoking the name of the Lord;*[4] where the word *Lord* evidently means Christ. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, says: *Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved;*[5] where the context clearly shows that Christ is meant. The same apostle, in addressing the Corinthians, at the commencement of his epistle to them says: *Unto the church of God at Corinth . . . . with all that in every place invoke the name of the Lord Jesus,*[6] i. e. all Christians; naming them just as we have seen Ananias did, by mentioning that distinguishing act of their religion, viz, invocation upon Jesus, which separated them from all others. The same Paul, when he had a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him, *besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from him.*[7] Here the context makes it quite certain, that by the *Lord*, Christ is meant. The same writer again points out Christians, in his first epistle to Timothy, by using the phrase *they that call upon the Lord*, as descriptive of them.[8]

[1] Acts 7: 59.
[2] Acts 9: 13, 14.
[3] Acts 9: 21.
[4] Acts 22: 16.
[5] Rom. 10: 13.
[6] 1 Cor. 1: 2.
[7] 2 Cor. 12: 8.
[8] 2 Tim. 2: 22.

Moreover the holy apostle, who in the visions of God saw heaven opened, tells us that *the four living creatures, and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours.*[1] But what are these *odours*, which the leaders of the heavenly choir present, in the posture of humble adoration, to the Lamb? The writer has told us: *They are the* PRAYERS *of the saints*, i. e. of the church on earth. Here then it is made certain, that the Lamb is the object of invocation by the saints on earth, and of religious adoration by the host of heaven above.

Paul does not scruple to direct the same expression of homage and praise to the Saviour, as to God the Father. At the close of his epistle to the Hebrews he says: *Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever, Amen.*[2] Peter says the same thing: *Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; to him be glory both now and forever, Amen.*[3]

In heaven they do the same. Says the holy apostle who enjoyed the visions of God: *Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever.*[4] Here, brethren, is that *Lamb of God, who has taken away the sins of the world*, on the throne of the universe; here he is represented as worshipped by all heaven, in the same manner as He is, who sitteth with him on the throne.

And why should not this be so, if the same apostle who relates this, is worthy of credit in his other declarations? He has said, that *in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the* WORD WAS GOD.[5] He has told us that *all things were made by him*, and that *without him was nothing made, which was made.*[6] He has said of the Son of God: *This is the true God and eternal life.*[7] Neither the grammati-

[1] Rev. 5: 8.
[2] Heb. 13: 21.
[3] 2 Pet. 3: 18.
[4] Rev. 5: 13.
[5] John 1: 1.
[6] John 1: 3.
[7] 1 John 5: 20.

cal construction, nor the idiom of the writer, allows us to refer this last declaration to any other than the Saviour.

Paul also has given us sufficient reason to regard the Saviour as the object of our worship. He has declared him to be *God over all, blessed forever.*[1] He has affirmed of him, that *in the beginning, he laid the foundation of the earth; that the heavens are the work of his hands;* and that while *they all shall perish, he is the same, and his years shall not fail.*[2] He has said, that by him *all things were created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him.*[3] In writing to Titus, the same apostle has described the gospel as teaching us to *look for the blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God even our Saviour Jesus Christ;*[4] for so, I cannot doubt, the original ought to be translated.

Are any inclined now to ask the question: *How* can all this be true? My answer is, that *facts* themselves are all that it concerns us to know. The *manner* in which things can be, is not important to us; and is indeed unknown, even in respect to the most common phenomena of nature. *Facts* I have now given you, on the authority of the divine word. If you ask: *How* could Christ be God and man? I answer with Paul: *God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself;*[5] *God was manifest in the flesh;*[6] for after all the controversy about the genuineness of this text, it seems quite evident to me that it must be acknowledged, according to the rules of criticism. Nor is what Paul asserts any more than John has told us, when he says that *the Word was God,*[7] and then declares that *the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.*[8] The same apostle too has told us of assertions which the Saviour himself made, that amount to the same thing. *Whoever,* said Jesus to Philip when he had asked to see the Father, *whoever*

[1] Rom. 9: 5.
[2] Heb. 1: 10—12.
[3] Col. 1: 16.
[4] Tit. 2: 13.
[5] 2 Cor. 5: 19.
[6] 1 Tim. 3: 16.
[7] John 1. 1.
[8] John 1: 14.

hath seen me, hath seen the Father.[1] And again, *I am in the Father, and the Father in me.*[2]

This is enough for the humble Christian, who receives the Scriptures as the word of God, and the only rule of his faith and practice. You, my brethren, who are to meet here in the Saviour's name, will, I trust, call upon that name. You will worship the Father in him, and him in the Father. The manner in which natures human and divine are united in the person of the Saviour, you need not inquire after; you ought not to do it; for you can find no precedent for so doing, in the book of God. The *fact* is all you need to know; and the fact you ought as Christians to believe, and you must believe, if you pay implicit deference to the authority of the Bible.

This then is another of the distinctive traits of Christians as such. They are not simple worshippers of God, the God of nature; but worship God in Christ and through him. May your practice, in this respect, be like that of Paul, and Peter, and Stephen, and John, and of others whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life!

I shall notice but one more distinctive trait of Christians, on the present occasion. This is,

4. That *they obey the commandments of Christ.*

If ye love me, said the Saviour to his apostles, *keep my commandments.*[3] Again: *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.*[4] Once more: *If a man love me, he will keep my words.*[5] On another occasion he said to them: *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love;* and again:[6] *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*[7]

The same apostle who has recorded this has said: *Hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*[8]

To the same purpose Paul speaks, when addressing the

[1] John 14: 8, 9.
[2] John 14: 11.
[3] John 14: 15.
[4] John 14: 21.
[5] John 14: 23.
[6] John 15: 10.
[7] John 15: 14.
[8] 1 John 2: 3, 4.

Christians at Rome he says: *How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer in it?*[1] And again: *Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.*[2] Once more: *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*[3]

But there would be no end of citing texts like these, from the New Testament. I will only add, on the present occasion, that whatever evidences any man may think himself to have of being a Christian, if he have not this, that he keeps the commandments of the Saviour, his religion is nothing more than profession, empty profession. No matter how orthodox he may be in his *speculations;* if he be not so in his *practice*, it is all in vain. *Faith without works is dead. The devils believe and tremble;*[4] but the devils do not obey.

I have now done with this part of my discourse. I have left, and must of necessity leave, many points untouched, which belong to the Christian's system of faith and practice, and which serve to distinguish him from religionists of other names. I designed only to bring to view some of the more prominent and important points, which render this distinction palpable. I must hasten to my

II. General head of discourse, which was designed for *inquiry respecting the meaning of the declaration, that Christ will be in the midst of those who assemble in his name.*

I shall say but few words in regard to this; as it needs but little illustration. When Christ says he will be in the midst of his disciples, the simple meaning is, that he will be present to aid and to bless them. It is of the same import as the phrase *to be with one.* Christ promised his ministers *to be with them always*, i. e. to aid and bless them always. So he promises Christians, whenever they assemble in his name, to help and to bless them.

This promise will be fulfilled. His veracity is pledged for its fulfilment. But when Christians are every day conven-

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[1] Rom 6: 2. [3] Rom 8: 9. [4] James 2: 19, 20.
[2] Rom. 6: 15.

ing in every part of the earth, and in a multitude of places widely distant from each other are meeting together at the same moment, how can his pledge be redeemed, unless Christ has a power of omnipresence? It is difficult, rather (I may say) it is beyond our ability, even to imagine the possibility of this, unless the Saviour is invested essentially with divine attributes. You, my brethren, who are to meet here in his name, believe this; and you have no difficulty therefore in giving full credit to what our text asserts. On this subject, I have no fears of raising your expectations too high. Only perform the conditions required of you as the disciples of Christ; meet here in his name, on his account, as his humble, devoted, obedient followers; and *he will be in the midst of you*, he will aid and bless you, in all that you are called to do and suffer for his name's sake.

It is with the design of so doing, and with the hope you may obtain the precious blessing which the Saviour has promised in our text, that you have associated yourselves into a regular church, and erected this goodly edifice, where we are now assembled. You consecrated yourselves to your God and Saviour, when you first united with his children, in order to approach his table, and celebrate the memory of his dying love. You repeated these solemn vows, before him who searches the heart, and before your fellow men, when you formed the religious association who are here habitually to meet in the name of Christ, and pay their homage to him. And now you come, having consecrated yourselves to him who redeemed you, to consecrate this holy temple, the fruit of your cares and labours, to him whose presence you hope will dwell in it—will be *always* here in the midst of you, whenever you assemble.

Come then, brethren, unite now with me, whom you have made the organ of communicating your views and feelings on the present occasion, in the dedication of this sacred structure to him.

O God, whom the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain; who art worshipped in thine eternal courts above,

by the general assembly and church of the first born; this edifice, in which we are assembled, with all that belongs to it; this temple reared by mortal hands, and designed for thy service, we consecrate to thee! To thee, Father of our spirits and framer of our bodies, our kind preserver, our constant benefactor, we consecrate it! Saviour of sinners, Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, who redeemest us to God by thy blood, we dedicate it to thee! To thee, eternal Spirit, our Sanctifier, our Guide, our Comforter, we consecrate it! King eternal, immortal, invisible, only wise God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, forever let it be sacred to thee!

And now Lord God our Saviour, accept this voluntary offering and consecration of ourselves, and ours, to thee! Fulfil now the desire of our souls, in respect to that gracious presence, for which thy disciples assembling here are encouraged to hope! To the latest generation, may multitudes convene here in thy name, and find delightful proof that thou art in the midst of them! May this goodly structure, which has now been consecrated to thee, survive the vicissitudes of time, and be a soul refreshing place, for those who love thy precious name, down to the period of thy second coming! Then with the wreck of countless worlds, let it crumble to dust, at the sound of thine awful trumpet; and let those who have worshipped thee here, in the spirit of the gospel, at thy command shake off the sleep of ages; burst the bars of death, and rise in thy glorious image, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads;—rise and meet with all the ransomed of the Lord before thy throne, to worship in that temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens! AMEN.

LETTER

TO

WILLIAM E. CHANNING, D. D.

ON THE SUBJECT OF

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

[Perhaps the object of the following Letter may seem to the reader to have been merely of a temporary nature; and inasmuch as the immediate occasion of writing it has long since ceased to operate, it may be deemed more advisable, by some, to omit the piece in question. My reasons for republishing it, however, are not simply those which originally and specially induced me to write the Letter. It is some sixteen years since it was published; and although three large editions of it were then printed, it has long since been out of the market, and not procurable for those who wished a copy of it. The subjects discussed are those which, in a general point of view, can never cease to be interesting in a *Republic*, like ours. The truths which I have endeavoured to illustrate and vindicate, are those which ought to be ever kept watchfully in view among us, and can never be over-estimated. It will be seen, by the *Postscript* to this Letter, (written for the present edition), that reasons for vindicating religious liberty are not wanting, in the present posture and proceedings of some religious partizans. It is time to look at this whole matter once more, and as it were *de novo*. Especially am I desirous of bringing this subject before the public, at the present time, because our brethren in England and on the continent of Europe, are beginning, at last, to open their eyes upon the subject of *Church and State*, and to throw off the shackles which civil governments impose upon their consciences in matters of religion. They look to our views, as resulting from actual experience, and are anxious to know our feelings and opinions in such circumstances. If I might indulge the hope that my feeble voice would be heard across the Atlantic, by those who are struggling for the liberties of true Protestantism against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places, I would fain believe, that a statement of the ground, which we take and vindicate here, may be of some use to them in their inquiries. At all events, we need at home to have our own minds stirred up in the way of remembrance; for we are yet not a little short of attaining to entire and rightful liberty and equal justice. There are two ways of hindering the enjoyment of such liberty; the one, open and direct, by oppressive ordinances; the other under the broad shield of *constructive* law; which, however, when thus employed, is covert and out of public view. We have little or no rea-

son to fear the former; under the latter a part of our community, as I believe, are now suffering.

The position I have taken is somewhat bold; and there are not wanting those who will doubtless deem it assuming. I can only say: Πάταξον μέν, ἄκουσον δέ; or (to modify this a little in translating it) read first and then judge. If I have exhibited a narrow party spirit, such as the Orthodox are charged with cherishing—then smite; and even more than once. If I have merely given voice, as a freeman, to the feelings of some hundreds of thousands in this Commonwealth; if, although I may have nothing extenuated, I have still not set down aught in malice; then those, who feel that my complaints are uttered in order to reach their ears, and who do not relish the idea of discussing such matters before the public, will, I hope, take what I say in good part, and regard it as the voice of *friendly* monition, and not the obloquy of an enemy. My earthly course is nearly finished; and I can have but little to fear from any injustice that I complain of, so far as it respects myself. But he who knows all hearts, knows that I love my country, and love this noble Commonwealth, and earnestly wish for its highest prosperity and welfare. I feel as if I were now giving my last testimony to the great cause of religious liberty; and feeble as it may be, I do trust that it is sincere, and animated by a sense of sacred duty. Every mite may do some good when rightly and timely contributed; for it helps to swell the aggregate feeling in favour of religious rights and liberty which are absolute and complete. Most sincerely do I hope, ere I quit the world, to see all grounds of such complaint, as I feel compelled to make, removed, and this Republic become an example to the whole earth of true religious freedom and equal justice in their fullest sense.

My Brethren in sentiment, in whose behalf I speak, (although not as their constituted representative), will cheer me, as I hope, in my arduous task, by their approbation. To those of whom I complain, I would most respectfully say: If you acknowledge me as a fellow-citizen and a freeman, you will concede to me the right to speak, so long as I observe the rules of decorum, of moderation, and of comity. Such of you as are truly liberal, (and many such there are), will even thank me for turning your attention to matters of serious complaint and uneasiness. To the partizans among those of whom we complain, whose practical maxim seems to be: *Aut Cæsar, aut nihil*, I have only to say, that I do not feel myself bound to be silent, because they do not like to hear me speak about such matters. Sure I am, that they cannot with any truth say, that it is no concern of mine. Every citizen of the State has a direct and deep interest in the subjects discussed. If the day of reflection should come, and a change of the course which some influential men are pursuing should be the result of it, they will then thank me for the suggestions I have made, however unwelcome the whole subject may now be. I have not uttered one word for the sake of reproach. What may seem at first view to look like this, is nothing more than a simple statement of facts, or a picture of grievances. While undertaking to admonish others of wrong, I ought to be the last to do a wrong, like to that of which I complain.—M. S.]

LETTER.

Reverend Sir,

In perusing the volume which you have recently published, entitled 'Discourses, Reviews, and Miscellanies,' and also in reading your 'Election Sermon' recently delivered before the Legislature of this State, I have met with some passages which contain charges, expressed or implied, against the denomination of Christians in Massachusetts who are called *Orthodox* or *Trinitarians*, that seem to me to deserve serious and candid examination. If they are indeed well founded, it is proper that the community should know it; nor can it be taken amiss, that you have given your name to the world as a pledge that they can be established and made good. But if they have no foundation in point of fact, you will join with me in saying that they ought in justice no longer to pass current under the sanction of your name, but that the public should be correctly informed respecting them.

Passages in your recently published works, of the nature to which I have above adverted, are somewhat numerous. But as it is not my object to multiply quotations, or to dispute about words, I shall content myself in this place with making merely a few extracts.

My first extract shall be from your Election Sermon recently published.

"You have all heard of the outward evils, which religion, when thus turned into tyranny, has inflicted; how it has dug dreary dungeons, kindled fires for the martyr, and invented instruments of exquisite torture. But to me all this is less fearful than its influence over the mind. When I see the superstitions

which it has fastened on the conscience, the spiritual terrors with which it has haunted and subdued the ignorant and susceptible, the dark appalling views of God which it has spread far and wide, the dread of inquiry which it has struck into superior understandings, and the servility of spirit which it has made to pass for piety,—when I see all this, the fire, the scaffold, and the outward inquisition, terrible as they are, seem to me inferior evils. I look with a solemn joy on the heroic spirits, who have met freely and fearlessly pain and death in the cause of truth and human rights. But there are other victims of intolerance, on whom I look with unmixed sorrow. They are those, who, spell-bound by early prejudice or by intimidations from the pulpit and the press, dare not think; who anxiously stifle every doubt or misgiving in regard to their opinions, as if to doubt were a crime; who shrink from the seekers after truth as from infection; who deny all virtue, which does not wear the livery of their own sect; who, surrendering to others their best powers, receive unresistingly a teaching which wars against reason and conscience; and who think it a merit to impose on such as live within their influence, the grievous bondage, which they bear themselves. How much to be deplored is it, that religion, the very principle which is designed to raise men above the judgment and power of man, should become the chief instrument of usurpation over the soul.

"Is it said, that, in this country, where the rights of private judgment, and of speaking and writing according to our convictions, are guarantied with every solemnity by institutions and laws, religion can never degenerate into tyranny; that here its whole influence must conspire to the liberation and dignity of the mind?" I answer, we discover little knowledge of human nature, if we ascribe to constitutions the power of charming to sleep the spirit of intolerance and exclusion. Almost every other bad passion may sooner be put to rest; and for this plain reason, that intolerance always shelters itself under the name and garb of religious zeal. Because we live in a country, where the gross, outward, visible chain is broken, we must not conclude that we are necessarily free. There are chains not made of iron, which eat more deeply into the soul. An espionage of bigotry may as effectually close our lips and chill our hearts, as an armed and hundred-eyed police. There are countless ways by which men in a free country may encroach on their neighbours' rights. In religion the instrument is ready made and always at hand. I refer to Opinion, combined and organized in

sects, and swayed by the clergy. We say we have no Inquisition. But a sect, skilfully organized, trained to utter one cry, combined to cover with reproach whoever may differ from themselves, to drown the free expression of opinion by denunciations of heresy, and to strike terror into the multitude by joint and perpetual menace,—such a sect is as perilous and palsying to the intellect as the Inquisition. It serves the minister as effectually as the sword. The present age is notoriously sectarian, and therefore hostile to liberty."—pp. 25—28.

Again, in the newly printed volume of your Discourses, etc. you say:

"We do not deny, that our brethren have a right to form a judgment as to our Christian character. But we insist that we have a right to be judged by the fairest, the most approved, and the most settled rules, by which character can be tried; and when these are overlooked, and the most uncertain standard is applied, we are injured; and an assault on character, which rests on this ground, deserves no better name than defamation and persecution.

"I know that this suggestion of persecution will be indignantly repelled by those, who deal most largely in denunciation. But persecution is a wrong or injury inflicted for opinions; and surely assaults on character fall under this definition. Some persons seem to think, that persecution consists in pursuing error with fire and sword; and that therefore it has ceased to exist, except in distempered imaginations, because no class of Christians among us is armed with these terrible weapons. But no. The form is changed, but the spirit lives. Persecution has given up its halter and fagot, but it breathes venom from its lips, and secretly blasts what it cannot openly destroy.—pp. 561, 562.

In the same volume, when speaking (as in the preceding extract) against a "system of exclusion and denunciation in religion," you make the following remarks:

"Another important consideration is, that this system of excluding men of apparent sincerity, for their opinions, entirely subverts free inquiry into the Scriptures. When once a particular system is surrounded by this bulwark; when once its defenders have brought the majority to believe, that the rejection of it is a mark of depravity and perdition; what but the name of liberty is left to Christians? The obstacles to inquiry are as

real, and may be as powerful, as in the neighborhood of the Inquisition. The multitude dare not think, and the thinking dare not speak. The right of private judgment may thus, in a Protestant country, be reduced to a nullity. It is true, that men are sent to the Scriptures; but they are told before they go, that they will be driven from the church on earth and in heaven, unless they find in the Scriptures the doctrines which are embodied in the popular creed. They are told, indeed, to inquire for themselves; but they are also told, at what points inquiry must arrive; and the sentence of exclusion hangs over them, if they happen to stray, with some of the best and wisest men, into forbidden paths. Now this 'Protestant liberty,' is, in one respect, more irritating than Papal bondage. It mocks as well as enslaves us. It talks to us courteously as friends and brethren, whilst it rivets our chains. It invites and even charges us to look with our own eyes, but with the same breath warns us against seeing anything which Orthodox eyes have not seen before us. Is this a state of things favorable to serious inquiry into the truths of the gospel; yet, how long has the church been groaning under this cruel yoke?

"Another objection to this system of excluding professed disciples of Christ, on account of their opinions, is, that it is inconsistent with the great principles of Congregationalism. In churches, where the power is lodged in a few individuals, who are supposed to be the most learned men in the community, the work of marking out and excluding the erroneous may seem less difficult. But among Congregationalists, the tribunal before which the offender is to be brought is the whole church, consisting partly of men in humble circumstances, and of unimproved minds; partly of men engaged in active and pressing business; and partly of men of education, whose studies have been directed to law and medicine. Now is this a tribunal, before which the most intricate points of theology are to be discussed, and serious inquirers are to answer for opinions, which they have perhaps examined more laboriously and faithfully than all their judges? Would a church of humble men, conscious of their limited opportunities, consent to try, for these pretended crimes, professing Christians, as intelligent, as honest, and as exemplary as themselves? It is evident, that in the business of excluding men for opinions, a church can be little more than the tool of their minister, or a few influential members; and our churches are, in general, too independent and too upright to take this part in so solemn a transaction. To correct their

deficiencies, and to quicken their zeal on this point, we are now threatened with new tribunals, or Consociations, whose office it will be to try ministers for their errors, to inspect the churches, and to advise and assist them in the extirpation of 'heresy.' Whilst the laity are slumbering, the ancient and free constitution of our churches is silently undermined, and is crumbling away. Since argument is insufficient to produce uniformity of opinion, recourse must be had to more powerful instruments of conviction; I mean, to ECCLESIASTICAL COURTS. And are this people indeed prepared to submit to this most degrading form of vassalage; a vassalage, which reaches and palsies the mind, and imposes on it the dreams and fictions of men, for the everlasting truth of God!"—pp. 565, 566.

Once more, in your preface to the same volume you say;

"It is due to myself to say, that the controversial character of a part of this volume, is to be ascribed, not to the love of disputation, but to the circumstances in which I was called to write. It was my lot to enter on public life at a time when this part of the country was visited, by what I esteem one of its sorest scourges; I mean, by a revival of the spirit of intolerance and persecution. I saw the commencement of those systematic efforts, which have been since developed, for fastening on the community a particular creed. Opinions, which I thought true and purifying, were not only assailed as errors, but branded as crimes. Then began, what seems to me one of the gross immoralities of our times, the practice of aspersing the characters of exemplary men, on the ground of differences of opinion as to the most mysterious articles of faith. Then began those assaults on freedom of thought and speech, which, had they succeeded, would have left us only the name of religious liberty. Then it grew perilous to search the Scriptures for ourselves, and to speak freely according to the conviction of our own minds. I saw that penalties, as serious in this country as fine and imprisonment, were, if possible, to be attached to the profession of liberal views of Christianity, the penalties of general hatred and scorn; and that a degrading uniformity of opinion was to be imposed by the severest persecution, which the spirit of the age would allow. At such a period, I dared not be silent. To oppose what I deemed error, was to me a secondary consideration. My first duty, as I believed, was, to maintain practically and resolutely the rights of the human mind; to live and to suffer, if to suffer were necessary, for that intellectual and religious liber-

ty, which I prize incomparably more than my civil rights. I felt myself called, not only to plead in general for freedom of thought and speech, but, what was more important and trying, to assert this freedom by action. I should have felt myself disloyal to truth and freedom, had I confined myself to vague commonplaces about our rights, and forborne to bear my testimony expressly and specially to proscribed and persecuted opinions. The times required that a voice of strength and courage should be lifted up, and I rejoice, that I was found among those by whom it was uttered and sent far and wide."—pp. vii. viii.

On the tenor and spirit of these accusations throughout, (which however only accord with a multitude of other passages in your writings), it is not my purpose here to remark in a particular manner. I reserve what I have more specially to say respecting these, for another part of the present Letter.

I trust you will have the ingenuousness to avow at once, that it was your intention in these passages, and in others of the like nature, to characterize the efforts, the arguments, the designs, and the cause of those who are usually denominated *Orthodox* or *Trinitarians* in this Commonwealth.

You will permit me, in the following pages, to name the class of men *Orthodox*, to whom I here advert, and to call their liberal opponents *Unitarians*. I do this merely for the sake of convenience and brevity; not for the sake of making any claims for one party, or of casting any odium on the other, by the use of such appellations.

In the above extracts then, (as often elsewhere), you have charged the Orthodox with a settled, steadfast, unrelenting purpose to suppress all free inquiry respecting matters of religion, to cover with reproach those who may differ from themselves, to drown the free expression of opinion by denunciations of heresy, and to strike terror into the multitude by joint and perpetual menace. In addition to all this, you represent them as saying: "Since argument is insufficient to produce uniformity of opinion, recourse must be had to more powerful instruments of conviction, to ECCLESIASTICAL COURTS."

If there could be any doubt whom you mean to characterize, in the passages extracted from your Election Sermon, and from the preface to the volume of your Works, the declarations in the Appendix to this volume, in the piece which commences on page 557, put the matter beyond all controversy. I will not therefore expend any time in labouring to establish a point so perfectly clear. I take it for granted that you yourself are altogether too frank and ingenuous, even to pretend that you did not mean to characterize Orthodox Christians in general throughout this State, and in particular the clergy who belong to this denomination of Christians. And I take this for granted, because I cannot help believing that no Unitarian who reads your writings, has ever once suspected, or ever will suspect, that you meant to characterize any other than the Orthodox; and no Orthodox man who reads the whole of your works, can possible suppose otherwise. You aim at *real* existences, not *imaginary, future, fantastic* ones; I mean those which you believe to be real. The friends with whom I am accustomed to think and act, do not once suspect you of laying out your energies, in belabouring what you believe to be "a man of straw."

For myself then, as one among the denomination of the Orthodox, I take my full share of all the remarks which you have made against them. One and all of my brethren, with whom I am united in sentiment and affection, feel, so far as I know, in the same manner as I do, with respect to the design of your remarks. We understand you to aim these accusations directly at us; for it does not signify to go round and round this matter, as afraid to look at it or to touch it. We know that the accusation and reproaches are intended to strike us; and we stand up, without a blush or a trembling nerve, before the tribunal of denunciation where you have arraigned us, to hear our sentence with that fortitude, we would fain hope, which it becomes those to exercise who sincerely believe that they are in the right. If we now take the liberty to move an arrest of your judgment, we hope you will not refuse us a hearing. It is natural, you know, for

men who are accused of crimes that are *capital* as to *reputation* if not as to life, to appeal, in case of condemnation, to a higher tribunal, if such appeal be lawful; and if not, to move an arrest of judgment, when the verdict or sentence does not agree with facts and evidence. Above all will they do this, when they know the accusations to be wholly ungrounded, and that they are truly innocent of the matters laid to their charge.

I acknowledge, indeed, that a few solitary passages are found in your writings, in which you seem to manifest a little relenting on the subject of the severe and high wrought language with which you reproach me and my brethren. You sometimes say, that you aim not at *Calvinists*, but at *Calvinism;* that there are men among the party whom you oppose, whose hearts are better than their heads, and whose religious character you feel bound to respect; and other things of the like nature. But such declarations are "few and far between." They seem most evidently to be the result of mere constraint, when they do appear; constraint arising probably from a sense of decorum, and apparently too from an apprehension, that a strenuous advocate of *liberality* does not appear altogether to the best advantage, while he is uttering indiscriminate condemnation against more than one half of the community in which he lives, and which, if it be well grounded, falls with more justice still and with heavier weight, on the blessed Pilgrims who laid the foundation of his country's happy freedom and greatness.

It is my most serious conviction, arising from a perusal of your writings *as a whole*, that no one can justly affirm us to be under obligation to you on the score of benevolence and kindness, because of the *exceptions* to which I have just referred. A native Fellah of Egypt, being in company with a recent European traveller there of great spirit and intelligence, was asked by the latter, (who had been expatiating in praise of the Pasha of Egypt, and on the happy, flourishing, and safe condition of the country), whether he did not agree with him as to the munificent and generous character of his

sovereign. To this the Fellah replied, with a most significant look, and elevating his hands toward heaven; "God is great! Our lord, the Pasha, gives with *one* hand, and takes away with *two*." So it is, my dear Sir, with your praise. In some solitary passages, you allow, for decency's sake and in order to save the appearance of *liberality*, that there are some among us who have a share of common sense in respect to most subjects, and a few that have a little smattering of what the world deems learning; possibly two or three Orthodox individuals may be found, in the whole State, that have a small degree of cultivated taste. But in other passages almost without number, you rank the whole together, and fearlessly avow that none but bigots, and those who have bid adieu to what little understanding they possessed, can be found in the ranks of Orthodoxy. And what is more than all, some of your partial friends applaud this, and call it bold and fearless declaration of the truth, and the development of high and commanding genius.

I cannot say, however, that I feel any gratitude for such concessions. It lies on the face of your writings, that they are against the tenor of your habitual feelings and views, which (in respect to us) are most manifestly those of scorn, of indignation, and of unsparing severity. You give with *one* hand, but take away with *two*. For one, I am unable to bring my mind to an attitude, in which such gifts can be gratefully accepted. If it be my fault, may heaven forgive me for it! But I am as yet ignorant of its being a fault. I have been accustomed to suppose, and do still believe, that in a land of religious freedom, the Orthodox have as good a right to *maintain* the doctrines of the Pilgrims, as Unitarians have to *assail* them; and that the time has not yet come, when any one individual, however exalted in his own view or in that of his party, can by sweeping denunciations and accusations crush all who venture to oppose him. Sir, you could not have committed a greater mistake than to assume the place of that individual; to consign us over to the ranks of those, who are plotting against the dearest rights of all who

have any respect for religion; to hold us up to the world as combined to oppress and to enslave (in a religious respect) our fellow citizens; and then to deliver us over to the execration of all honest men, who prize Christian liberty and social freedom.

There is no denying that you have done this. It stands in high relief in the preceding extracts, which you cannot disavow. More especially you cannot disavow them, because most of them are not the hasty effusions of moments when excitement was urging on the thoughts and the pen and the press, but they are declarations *reviewed* and *republished* to the world after a series of years, in which, as one would naturally suppose, anger had time to cool and resentment to be disarmed. They are written in characters so large and plain, that 'he who runneth may read.' Nor did you, when you penned them, believe or expect that Unitarians would misinterpret them. I cannot refrain from believing that you did *boná fide* mean them to speak, what they plainly appear to speak.

And now, when called before such a tribunal, and loaded with denunciations which if credited would forever blast our character and ruin our influence with the community, we do not confess the justice of our sentence, nor acquiesce in it as passed by a court which has the legitimate and ultimate power of deciding. We have a right to appeal, and we do make the appeal, to the public, to honest and candid men of all classes and parties, we care not what their name may be, from the accusations that you have so often and with such unexampled severity proffered against us, and from the sweeping judgment of excision, (excision as to all respect or affection or confidence due to us), which you have so often pronounced.

I say *we* here, not because I am deputed by my brethren to perform the task of writing this pamphlet, (for this is not the case); but because I know their sentiments and feelings on these subjects. None of my brethren had even any knowledge that I was engaged in this work, until it was completed.

So I cannot be accused of acting in *concert*, or of being urged on by the calls of party. But knowing them as I do, I venture here to speak in their behalf as well as my own. Whatever is wrong in this letter, they and the public must put to my account alone. Whatever is just and true, may be considered as spoken in behalf of all my injured brethren as well as myself.

We are accused of a settled design to invade the religious liberties of this community, and to force upon them, sooner or later, a creed which was framed in the dark ages, and is worthy only of them. We are charged with an intention to erect *ecclesiastical courts*, which, like the Inquisition of old, are by terror and compulsion to bring this whole Commonwealth to one uniform system of religious doctrine.

Such allegations it is proper that we should meet; and in order to do this, I shall begin with an open declaration and avowal of our sentiments on the subject of religious liberty. I cannot indeed vouch for it that every man in this State who is named Orthodox, will subscribe to the following sentiments. But this I can say fully, that all among the Orthodox with whom I am acquainted, whether of the clergy or of the laity, do for substance agree in the principles of religious freedom that I am now to propose. With most, against whom I suppose the denunciations in your works are *specially* directed, I have the pleasure of being acquainted; and I know well their feelings and views. I venture therefore to say *we;* and I am fully confident, that the avowal made in this manner cannot be contradicted by any credible evidence whatever.

Let us come then to the *sentiments* of the Orthodox, in regard to *religious liberty.* I will be as brief as the nature of the case admits. You will pardon me, however, for being somewhat *particular* and *specific*, because I wish to be definitely understood, and to allow of no room for misinterpretation.

(1) *We hold that every individual has a perfect right to examine and decide for himself, what his own religious sentiments or creed shall be.*

We mean by this, that no law of the land, no public authority or tribunals, and no private combination or society of men to which he has not voluntarily attached himself, shall have any power to demand from him any religious creed whatever, i. e. no power shall compel him to profess any creed, by civil penalty either in respect to his person, his property, or his civil or social rights. We are far from believing that religion has no connection with the prosperity and stability of government. We do fully believe that no good government on earth can be long maintained and be stable, without piety among its subjects. But this is an influence of religion on government and a connection with it, which are *indirect*. We do not hold to the expediency, or propriety, or safety, of committing in any sense to the civil government the disposal of religious matters, in respect either to faith or modes of worship. The only power which we wish ever to see them possess, is, that they may check what is indecent, or hurtful to the public morals, or dangerous to peace on account of the injury which it does to others. But this we would always desire to see effected, rather as an offence that is indictable at common law than by statute. We wish always to see civil government protect all its citizens in the peaceful enjoyment of their religious privileges; to do this, on the same ground that we should wish to see its subjects protected with respect to any other rights that are dear to them. We mean that the Mohammedan even, and the Jew, and the Deist, as well as the Christian, should have the liberty of worshipping in his own way among us, so long as they demean themselves peaceably, and do not invade the rights of others. We know of *no exception* to participation in *civil* and *social* rights, and *the right of worshipping in our own way*, or of even *not worshipping in any way*, under a government that is free in the sense that we would have it; and all this without any abridgement of the rights of citizens, without any civil disabilities. At most we know of only one case, to which an exception can be made on the ground of religious opinion. This is, where a man denies the existence of a God, or of a state of future rewards

and puni-hments. In such a case, we do not see how the obligation of an oath can have any binding force at all; and therefore we cannot see the propriety of administering one to him, either as a witness or as a magistrate. We cannot help looking on it as a mere mockery of this solemnity, to administer an oath in such cases.*

We are aware how much has been said, and may be said, in favour of the State having some established form of religion, and some particular religious test of office. But we are fully persuaded, that the evils which result from such an arrangement very much outweigh all the good that can be derived from it. Religion, all true religion, is a *voluntary* offering on the part of man to his Creator. *A forced creed is no creed. Belief, from its own nature and the very constitution of the human mind, must be free, spontaneous, induced by argument, not compelled by fear or by threats.* All professed belief of this latter kind, is utterly unworthy of the name. It is an object of abhorrence to God, and of loathing to men. And whether an attempt is made to force it on our minds, by the terrors of an Inquisitorial tribunal, or by the milder penalties of additional taxation and loss of civil rights, it matters not with us. We will not say that both of these ways of enforce-

* Recent decisions of the Supreme Court in the State seem to have settled this matter on the basis that a denial of the truths in question should be regarded as affecting the credibility rather than the competency of the witness. This will at least save the Courts much time and many inconsistencies of character. Plainly it is the correct way of managing this difficult matter. But whether it is consistent with the general principles among all Courts in Christian countries, and as I believe to be the fact, in the Supreme Court of the United States, is another question. Practically as it will operate in most cases, the difference between atheistic and other witnesses will be done away. Juries will not be apt to concern themselves with a matter of this kind. But the Supreme Court seem to have had a kind of foresight as to the times which are coming upon us. For what could they do, confined by their present rule, with the *Hopkinses* and other like philosophers? It would seem necessary for them to lay for office by going to Germany and attending courses of Lectures on *Philosophy* in order to be able to settle the question. *What is atheism? Who is an atheist?*

ing it ought to receive equal disapprobation from us; but we do truly say, that both receive our unqualified disapprobation.

We are the more confirmed in our views of religious liberty as thus explained, because we see very plainly, that the religious opinions which the civil power may sanction to-day, it may proscribe to-morrow. It has often done so. But believing as we do, that religion is a matter of immeasurably greater interest than everything which pertains to the present world, *we should be among the last men on earth to commit the disposal of our faith to the civil magistrate, who might on one day exalt the Christian religion, and on another trample the cross beneath his feet.* We set too high a value on this precious gift of heaven, ever voluntarily to commit the keeping of it to hands which may thus desecrate and abuse it.

I have only a word to add here, in order to prevent being misunderstood, respecting a *special* obligation which one may *voluntarily* contract, to a religious society who cherish a particular belief.

If we enter such a society, professing the same belief with them, and understand it as a condition of membership or good standing among them that we continue to cherish the same belief, then, in case we do change it, it is plainly lawful and proper that the society should withdraw from its connection with us as a member. But all this is a thing merely of *voluntary* obligation. And in *no case whatever* do we believe that civil disabilities, or penalties, should be connected with any excommunication by a Christian church.

(2) We not only believe that all men should be left free to form their religious opinions, without any civil penalties or disabilities, but we maintain most fully, that *when the religious sentiments of any one are formed, he has a right to propagate them, to defend them, and to support them, by his efforts, his pen, or his influence.*

In all this we understand of course, that in so doing he does not slander or abuse his neighbor, nor deny him any civil or social right as a member of the community, nor hinder him in the lawful exercise of it. Of the former of these faults the

civil law justly may take cognisance. Against the latter, the law of love and of doing as we would be done by protests.

We believe most fully, that men have a right to propagate their religious sentiments, *if they confine themselves to argument and persuasion*, and do not appeal to abuse, which is a crime in the eye of the civil law, it being manifestly against the peace of the community. We are well aware, indeed, of the mischiefs which may result from a free right to propogate religious, or rather *irreligious*, sentiments of any kind. We know too well, what incalculable evil the publication of such books as the Age of Reason, the works of Boulanger, of Voltaire, and of La Mettrie, have occasioned. We shudder at it as one of the most dreadful of evils, inasmuch as it takes hold on *eternity* and not merely on time. But dreadful as it is, we regard as a still greater evil, the power of civil government, or of any ecclesiastical tribunal, to suppress the publication of books at its option. To-day it may choose, as Frederic the Great did, and the French Directory after him, to circulate widely Voltaire, and D'Alembert, and Rousseau; or to-morrow it may spread wide the poison of some heresy lurking under a Christian name; while, at the same time, it inhibits all antidotes to these tremendous evils. The liberty of the press, *the unreserved liberty of it*, is in our view fundamental to religious liberty. If the press be, as it doubtless sometimes is, a most terrible instrument of doing evil, it is also one of the most efficient of all instruments in doing good. We would forever leave it open and free to do good; and if the liberty to do evil must come along with this, (and we do not see how it is possible to prevent it), why then the friends of truth must trust to argument, to reason, to conscience, and to God, for triumph over the powers of darkness. And this they may do, without peril to the cause in which they are engaged.

If I have not liberty to propagate my religious sentiments, provided I do it by reason, and argument, and persuasion, and with decorum, then I am not free. Liberty in its highest and most precious sense is denied me. As an immortal

being, I look forward to the time when myself and all around me are to enter on the "recompense of reward," a final and eternal one. If I am serious in my religious views; if I am well persuaded that they are true, and this after repeated and protracted and patient examination; then I must be utterly destitute even of the spirit of common humanity, if I do not desire others to participate with me in this persuasion. Were it a matter pertaining merely to their *temporal* interests, most of my fellows beings would pronounce me destitute of humanity, in case I should not warn those around me whom I thought to be in danger, and should not excite them to escape from it. But O the never-dying soul! The awful tribunal of "eternal judgment!" "The fearfulness of falling into the hands of the living God, who is a consuming fire!" If I believe that there are unequivocal declarations in God's word, (as I truly do), in respect to these tremendous subjects; if I believe that the impenitent are surely exposed to endless misery; that those who reject the Saviour as he is offered in the gospel, "shall not see life, but that the wrath of God will *abide* on them;" can I as a man of any pretensions to benevolence, refrain from telling all this to others, from urging it upon them, and from warning them of the danger in which I sincerely believe them to be? Truly, the opponents of our religious views must halt here, and candidly avow, that if such are our real convictions, we ought in all good conscience to urge them upon our neighbors.

Say, if you please, that we are utterly mistaken; that all our convictions are the result of superstition, or prejudice, or bigotry, or of a narrow illiberal education; yet so long as we are in this plight, what are we to do? As honest men, we must follow the dictates of our consciences. We acknowledge the possibility that these may be blinded, or perverted, or even "seared;" but so long as we are not convinced that this is the case, how can we do otherwise than propagate our sentiments by all proper methods and with all the earnestness in our power? The liberty of doing this, we value as

much more than we do mere *civil* liberty, as the interests of eternity exceed in value those of time.

If then it is essential to a full enjoyment of religious liberty, that *men should have the right of propagating their religious sentiments*, whatever they may be; and that they should be restrained by the laws of the land, only so far as the laws guard the reputation of individuals who may be unjustly assailed, and protect them from injury as to their property or rights; it will of course follow, that *men should have the right of defending their sentiments when they are assailed, and of showing, if they can do so, that the sentiments of those who assail them are erroneous and hurtful.*

Here, my dear Sir, is a part of religious liberty, on which it does seem to me that yourself, and some others who have the like zeal with you against the Orthodox, have not sufficiently reflected, or that you are unwilling to concede it. We believe, on the part of the Orthodox, that the sentiments of those distinguished men who fled from persecution in the old world, in order that they might worship God in the new one, and in such a way as best agreed with the dictates of their consciences,—that these sentiments do essentially agree with the revelation which God has made in the holy Scriptures. We believe this *ex animo*, from real persuasion, because we have searched the Scriptures and think that we find these sentiments there; not because Calvin, and the Reformers, and the Pilgrims believed them. The possibility of this, you I trust are prepared to admit. If there are bigots among us, as you so often assert, I may still venture to suggest, that at least we are not all bigots. Such of us then as believe, from investigating the Bible, that the sentiments of the Reformation are found there, hold fast to the position that we ought to have the liberty of defending these sentiments when they are assailed, and of exposing, if we can, the errors of those who assail them.

But here, it would seem, is the very essence of our crime. In your view, it appears to be altogether commendable, that Unitarians should deluge the community with Improved

Versions, with the works of Fellowes, and Belsham, and Priestley, and Cappe, and others of the like character; that they should form themselves into Tract Societies and distribute hundreds of thousands of Unitarian tracts, assailing the sentiments of the Orthodox openly, or secretly undermining the principles which they regard as of vital importance; that they should form Missionary Societies and endeavour not only to spread their principles among the Hindoos and coöperate with Rammohun Roy, but to traverse the regions of the West and South in our own land, and forestal the efforts of the Orthodox there; that they should hold public meetings, in which not only the clergy, but legislators, civilians, and judges from the highest seat of justice, come forward and excite the multitude against Orthodoxy; that they should issue periodicals monthly, weekly, and almost daily, in which the public are warned against the *Inquisition* that is forming among them, and the desperate set of bigots who are forging chains for their religious liberty; that they should declaim against these men and their principles, (their alleged or supposed principles), from one Sabbath to another, (in which you above all others, unless you are very erroneously represented, have taken the lead); all this, and much more of the same nature, is not only lawful in your eyes, but altogether commendable. In public and in private, from the pulpit and the press, you have not ceased to urge on, with all your eloquence, measures of this and the like nature.

But turn now the tablet, and look at the other side of the picture. When the Orthodox publish their books, tracts, and periodicals, they are represented as bigots who are little short of being raving mad. They have neither modesty nor humility. When they associate for the purposes of friendly conference and counsel, and in order to strengthen each other's hands, and to encourage each other to walk in the way of their forefathers, they are plotting in order to enclose the community in the toils of the Inquisition; they are forming "Ecclesiastical Courts," before which all liberal-

minded men, that choose to think and investigate for themselves, are sooner or later to be brought, and be made to know that there is *only one* way of thinking which is to be tolerated. And since such high crimes and misdemeanors as these have been laid to their charge, the public are told, that "the times have required *a voice of* STRENGTH *and* COURAGE *to be lifted up; and you rejoice that* YOU *are found among those by whom it has been uttered and sent far and wide.*" (Preface, p. vii.) Not a movement can they make, but they are suspected of forging manacles for the Liberalists, or at least of looking up the iron to make them with. The forges, to be sure, are under ground and out of sight, like the shops of the fabled Cyclops; but you know, as the neighbors of those famous blacksmiths of old did, that *operations* are going on, for you hear the hammering, although you cannot see the anvils.

On the claim for yourself of "a voice of strength and courage," and of "uttering and sending it *far and wide*," it does not become me to make any remarks. The thing I shall leave to speak for itself. But in respect to the assumption, (in the whole paragraph connected with this declaration, and in a multitude of other places in your publication), that all which is done by the Orthodox to oppose the views and designs of Liberalists is bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and unlawful conspiracy against religious liberty, and design to bring in again the dark ages of superstition and terror—all this *assumption*, in a land of religious liberty, where every man has the same right to defend and propagate his own sentiments as his neighbour has to propagate opposite ones; all this too, in the STATE of MASSACHUSETTS, in the very HOME of the PILGRIMS, and in near proximity to FANEUIL HALL and the MONUMENT OF BUNKER HILL—it requires some meekness to hear without emotion, and to bear with becoming patience.

What reason now, my dear Sir, can you assign, why the Orthodox have not as good a right to their Associations and Societies, their tracts, their pamphlets, their periodicals, yea,

their octavos; their zeal also, and their union, and even their strenuousness; in order to maintain their own sentiments, as you and those who are with you have to all these in behalf of Unitarianism? It is a fair question, and I do insist on a sober answer to it. Will you say, that men have no right to be in earnest, in defending *bigotry?* I know you do say this; that is, you say what manifestly implies this. But then I am not to be diverted from my argument by such an answer. Who, I ask, has made the decision that Orthodoxy is *bigotry?* 'Dr. Channing and his friends affirm it.' Granted; but in a land of *liberty*, there is a freedom of thought to be allowed; and by far the greater portion of our community have made up their minds, that *there is no bigotry* in the sentiments in question. But you, Sir, take for granted the very question in dispute; and taking this for granted, you decide just as though there was no appeal from your tribunal, and consign us over to the ranks of dark designing conspirators against the religious liberties of our country. It is too late to deny this, or to tread back as to these charges, unless indeed you recall the whole of them. They have gone forth "far and wide," and with "a voice of strength;" and I appeal to every honest and ingenuous man on earth, be he Unitarian or Trinitarian, whether they do not fairly imply all that I have understood them to imply.

Sir, I repeat it once more, the Orthodox do not understand why they have not the liberty of defending the opinions which their ancestors held, in case they do sincerely accord with them. That they do sincerely agree, they openly profess and avow; and neither yourself, nor any man on earth, has a right to call this in question. Why then do you reproach us, that we are in earnest to defend and to propagate our belief? We do from the heart believe, that the eternal salvation of our fellow beings is connected with a hearty assent to the fundamental principles which we avow. Should we not then be entirely destitute even of common humanity; should we not be treacherous to the cause which we profess to believe is infinitely important; should we not in fact be

gross hypocrites—if we did not manifest our earnestness in maintaining and propagating our religious sentiments?

But you will concede the *theory* of this principle. You will say, however, that the *manner* of our defending and propagating our sentiments is what you condemn, and that this is the principal subject of your severe animadversions.

To this I reply, first, that such is not the case in point of fact. You have represented us as having dark, selfish, malignant purposes; as determined at all adventures to introduce *compulsion* into matters of religion, a compulsion 'worse than the terrors of the Inquisition and the chains which it forges.' This surely is the blackest crime of all, if it be truly ours; and this as surely has nothing to do with the *manner* in which we defend and propagate our sentiments.

Next, as to the *manner* itself, I have but few remarks to make. I am ready to concede, on my part, that I have seen and read things among the Orthodox, the *manner* of which I in some respects heartily disapproved. I have never thought, that to rail at our opponents was either Christian or courteous. Above all, every reflecting man must say: Nothing can be more improbable, than that this kind of proceeding will be likely to convince those who differ from us. Who will hear us with patience, when we begin our reproof by letting him know that we think him either a fool or a knave?

I am not blinded to this by party zeal. I have seen some of it among those whom I warmly love and greatly respect. Perhaps I may have shown some of this same disposition in my own writings. If so, produce it, and I will tread that part under my feet, and make my atonement by unfeigned sorrow to an injured public, and to the injured cause of Christ. But if I have indulged in such a mode of writing, I am unconscious of it to myself. I disapprove it; I even abhor it; and yet I know that I am not proof against temptation, and that I am exposed to all the weaknesses and faults of those around me.

But while I thus answer to one part of your complaint by confession, I must be permitted to say, that so far as I have

been able to form a judgment from reading the periodicals and pamphlets of both parties, I do think that there is a wide difference between the faults of the Orthodox in this respect and those of Unitarians. I know of nothing in any recent Orthodox publications, which can well compare with the reiterated charges against us by Unitarians, from the pulpit and the press, of bigotry, of gloomy superstition, of dark and fraudulent designs on the religious liberties of our country, of worshipping a God who is a tyrant, of propagating horrible and blasphemous ideas of the Divinity, of worshipping a God who is no better than the devil, of an intention to renew the horrors of the Inquisition, of being gloomy, unsocial, illiterate misanthropes, enthusiasts, hypocrites, deceivers, and other things of the like nature. It were easy to substantiate this charge by abundance of evidence; and this too from publications which you yourself patronize by your pen, your purse, and your approbation.

But I forbear. The subject is distressing—it is even odious. There are men, I know, among your own denomination, who see all this and look upon it just as I do. You are very far from being agreed among yourselves in respect to such measures, as you must know; at least if you do not know it, your friends must have been uncommonly reserved in their communications. There are men among you, and not a few, of high and ingenuous feelings, who take the liberty to believe that the Orthodox have the same right to "urge hard" as the Unitarians have, and who look with disgust on all the accusations of such a nature as those to which I have adverted.

Notwithstanding all that has been done, however, in the way of making such accusations against us, I do not appear as an apologist for any severity, or for the calling of hard names, or for ill natured accusations, on the part of myself or of my brethren. If we are guilty in this respect, we stand condemned. But it is to be expected, that when men are charged with a great crime because they choose to walk, and insist on walking, in the old paths of the Reformers; and

when they are assailed in an angry and bitter and scornful manner for so doing; that some of them may be betrayed to go beyond the boundaries which Christian meekness and forbearance and even self-respect allow. I say this is not strange; although I do not deny that it is wrong. But if it be wrong, you, my dear Sir, are one of the last men who have a title to reproach us with this wrong, as I shall have occasion to show still further in the sequel, before this letter is closed.

Enough for the present, on the *religious liberty* which we avow and advocate, the liberty to defend our own sentiments and to propagate them. No government can properly interfere with this right. Nor can any party justly deny us such a liberty as I have endeavoured to defend. I know of no power on earth, which has the right to say to our opponents: 'You shall have unbounded liberty of speaking, and writing, and acting, in order to defend and propagate your sentiments; but the Orthodox cannot justly claim the same liberty for themselves.'

That men should differ in opinion, is incident to the frailty of human nature, and to the imperfection of human knowledge. But still we hold sacred the right to maintain our honest convictions, not by word and writing only, but by the use of our property and influence as well as our tongues and pens. Our Bill of Rights in this State assures us of this privilege. We have a right to endow Seminaries in order to furnish teachers of our own sentiments; we have a right to demand protection in this; the very same rights in both respects as Unitarians have. We have a right to give our property to *churches* of our own way of thinking, and to believe and maintain that *parishes* and churches are not one and the same. We have a right to feel ourselves injured when property given to Orthodox churches is wrested from us under colour of the law. We have rights in a University which is the property of the *whole* State, and was not founded or exclusively endowed by Unitarians; at least we have such rights, so long as we are not absolutely disfranchised.

We have a right to expect that the property of the State in such an establishment, should not be appropriated to the purposes of a party; and that the instructors in them should not give their services to one sect only, which has in *fact*, although not in name, excluded all others from any participation with them in these privileges. We who have children to educate, in common with our fellow citizens, feel the loss of such rights. We cannot help deeply feeling them; for we are obliged to send our children abroad, at a great expense, in order to avoid their becoming partizans in the present warfare against our own sentiments. We do not complain that our sentiments are opposed; but we complain that they are opposed in this way, and at the sacrifice of rights that we hold dear and deem sacred. We do not complain that Unitarians build up Seminaries for themselves, in order to educate young men to spread abroad and defend their own sentiments; they have an entire right to build up schools, colleges, or theological Seminaries of this kind, and to confine their privileges to their own body. The Bill of Rights assures them of this privilege. But they should remember, that it assures us of the same. What we complain of is, that an Institution which belongs in common to the whole State, which was founded and endowed to a large extent by Orthodox men, and consecrated to maintaining their faith, should now be made exclusively a party Seminary, so that from the President down to the janitor, no man of *known* Orthodox sentiments, can find access there as an instructor. We complain that rights public and common, should be seized by one exclusive party, and appropriated to their own purposes; that teachers, maintained at the expense of the Commonwealth, should be devoted to a seminary exclusively Unitarian, and paid from a fund in which the Orthodox have a common interest. Of all this we complain; but never shall or can complain, that Unitarians manage their *own* Seminaries entirely in their own way; provided always, that they concede to us the same liberty.

Look now for a moment on this whole case, and put your-

self in our place. Would you not feel, could you help feeling, that you had to deal with those, who being in possession of power forget right? And yet, Sir, you are not only looking on, but heartily approving of all this, and have yourself been an efficient agent in bringing it about. How can it be that there is only one side to such a question?

We are severely reproached, because we separate in our religious communion and worship from Unitarians. Some of your strongest expressions of disapprobation and indignation are poured out against us for this. And yet, when I examine this matter to the bottom, I am unable to see the justice of this reproof. We do sincerely believe, that certain sentiments are *essential* to the Christian religion. We regard them as being so essential, that true Christianity cannot exist without them. Whether we are in the right or the wrong as to this, it is not my present purpose to inquire. Enough that we sincerely believe ourselves to be in the right. If so, then how can others deny us the liberty of thinking and acting in a manner that accords with this? If we should not do so, it would be proof that we were neither sincere nor in earnest, in our religious sentiments; in other words, that we were hypocrites. You may believe this of us; and judging by the general tenor of your writings, I know not how to avoid the conclusion that you do think so. But we still aver, that you have no right to affirm this; and we must maintain this position, so long as our consciences acquit us in respect to the matter of this accusation.

In separating from those who differ from us in religious opinion, (as we believe, fundamentally), we are not led on by motives of bigotry or of an exclusive spirit. We are prone to ask a question which is not recent: "How can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" We do not urge these words beyond what we think to be their plain and obvious import. We do not think that small differences of opinion about *non-essentials*, are intended to be included in them. We limit the meaning to agreement in things, which in our view are *essential*. Such we do honestly believe to

be the difference between Unitarians and ourselves. And such, not a few of the Unitarians themselves have avowed it to be. Mr. Belsham declares that "we do not worship the same God;" and some of your writers and speakers declare, that the God whom we worship is a *devil*. How can you complain, then, that we separate from you? Surely you do not wish to be united in the bonds of communion with such worshippers. If you have any conscience on this subject, it must remonstrate against it.

But who among the Orthodox ever complains that Unitarians separate from them? I trust none. An inconsistency with the principles that we profess, would lie on the very face of such a complaint.

We do not proscribe men from whom we separate in our worship, either in a civil or social respect. We vote for them as our magistrates and legislators. We help to elevate them to the highest offices in the State; we do so, because there are among our religious opponents men whose civil and social worth we acknowledge, and pay it the cheerful tribute of our regard. We do it also, because the State in which we live is so divided in matters of religious opinion, that we fully believe a religious test for civil honour and office would be altogether inexpedient. We rejoice sincerely in the welfare of those whose religious opinions differ from ours, and cheerfully contribute to do them civil honour. All this cannot be denied of us with truth. And when we separate from them in our worship, it is with pain, with deep regret, with ardent wishes that they might cherish the like religious sentiments with ourselves; but with a consciousness too, that our duty to the principles which we profess, obliges us to follow the course that we pursue.

Such are our views, feelings, and motives, in regard to the painful subjects of dispute now agitated in this community. Such I am sure are my own; and such, I have satisfactory evidence, are the views of my beloved brethren with whom I have the pleasure to be associated in action and in belief.

I have thus given a brief view, in regard to our opinions about religious liberty and the rights of conscience. In differing from many around us, and in separating from their religious communion, we well know, we do fully recognize the fact, that we are responsible to the great HEAD of the Church. But we as fully believe, that we are responsible ONLY *to Him*. We do not mean to deny others the right of remonstrating, and of endeavouring to show us that our course is wrong; but it is also true, that we do not believe they have any right to *demand* that we should abandon it; nor do we think that to call us bigots, and hypocrites, and plotters against the religious liberties of the State, is the most Christian way of reclaiming us.

And now in view of these principles and of these facts in reference to Orthodox Christians, I would ask: Where is the ground of the accusations which are made against them as conspiring against the dearest liberties of the Commonwealth? I have often been struck, my dear Sir, in reading your writings as well as those of others, with the *manner* in which you prefer charges of the most heinous nature against us. On your own side, all that your party have done is liberal, and just, and noble, and worthy of the exalted age in which the "march of mind" has become so conspicuous, and which is carrying us on with a rapid stride far away from the Cimmerian regions of Calvin and Luther; nay, the boldest assertions, the most perilous propositions, if not evidence of a well directed and skilful aim at the enemy, seem to be evidence in your view of great valour and of high devotedness to the cause of the New Reformation. On the other hand, all efforts of the like nature among us, in defence of our own sentiments, or in the way of assailing what we think to be errors—all these from beginning to end, appear to be reputed as mere evidences of narrow mindedness, of gloomy bigotry, of furious zeal, of a persecuting spirit, and of dark designs to renew the manacles and the dungeons to which the disciples of Ignatius Loyola have so long made their appeal.

Sir, I do not understand this. By whom has the great

question been prejudged and settled, whether all that is just and true is so plainly on the side of Unitarianism, that it does not so much as admit of a single doubt, or rather, that it is to be assumed as a matter of course? Or is this assumption even founded on one of the great *a priori* principles of our moral nature, which it needs no reasoning to settle, and which no arguments can make plainer or stronger than it is from the very first moment that it is presented to the mind? So one who reads your writings, would be strongly tempted to suppose you deem it to be. What you say and write on subjects connected with religious dispute, bears this impress on its very face. If not, then I can solve the appearances in your writings, only by a supposition more disagreeable still, and to which I shall never resort without being absolutely driven to do it; I mean the supposition, that you have, by the flattery of your friends, and in consequence of dictating to your party so long, at last come to the position of mind, that *αὐτὸς ἔφη* is enough; that you expect as a matter of course, that all which you utter will be readily assented to, and that none but bigots will venture to call it in question. I will not, however, believe this either of you or your friends, without better evidence than any that yet lies before the public. I could easily believe that some of the journal and newspaper writers, who employ so many paragraphs in fulsome and bloated eulogies of your works, might belong to the class supposed above. But as I have no apprehension that you have any concert with them, or even thank them for the *lacker* which they strive to put on you, I have not a word more to say concerning them. What there is in your writings that deserves praise, (and this is much, and some of it of a very high order too), they seem to me to be so unfortunate as not to see; and what is of a different or doubtful character, they are pretty sure to laud in the most extravagant and disgusting manner.

Having thus explained the views and feelings of myself and my friends, in relation to the religious liberty which we think to be proper, and which we shall ever strenuously advocate,

and thus prepared the way to decide more fully how little your apprehensions respecting our principles and designs are capable of being justified and defended; I now proceed *more fully* to develope, (as I intimated near the commencement of this letter it was my intention to do), *the tenor and spirit* of your accusations against us.

In order to present a combined and condensed view of these, I must beg the liberty of repeating here, not the words in all cases, but the substance and spirit of the passages which the beginning of this letter presents. These, united with other extracts from your writings which I intend to make, will enable every intelligent reader to judge for himself, whether the complaints which I have brought forward, and which I have still to prefer, are not sufficiently well grounded.

I make no hesitation in repeating the expression of my entire undoubting conviction, that the Orthodox are the men whom you mean to characterize in these and the like passages; and all proof of this, to any intelligent reader, I must think to be utterly unnecessary.

In the first extract just named, you intimate that 'the religion of the Orthodox has been turned into spiritual tyranny; that it has fastened superstitions on the conscience; subdued the ignorant and susceptible with spiritual terrors; spread far and wide dark appalling views of God; struck a dread of inquiry into superior understandings; and made servility of spirit to pass for piety. The intimidations [of the Orthodox] from the pulpit and the press have rendered some too timid to think; made them anxiously to stifle every doubt or misgiving in regard to their opinions; to shrink from the seekers after truth as from infection; to surrender their best powers to others; and unresistingly to receive a teaching, which wars against conscience and reason. [Orthodoxy] makes chains, that eat more deeply into the soul than those of iron. This espionage of bigotry as effectually closes our lips and our hearts, as an armed and hundred-eyed police. This opinion is combined and organized in sects, and swayed by the clergy. A sect skilfully organized; trained to utter one cry; combined to

cover with reproach whoever may differ from themselves; to drown the free expression of opinion by denunciations of heresy; and to strike terror into the multitude by joint and perpetual menace—such a sect is as perilous and palsying to the intellect as the Inquisition. It serves the minister as effectually as the sword. *The present age is notoriously sectarian, and therefore hostile to liberty.*' Elect. Serm. pp. 25—28.

Of course, then, the *present* age is one in which such a sect lives, (i. e. in your estimation); and lives, not in Europe or Asia, where it would very little concern us, but here at home, in Old Massachusetts, the land of the blessed Pilgrims; and this sect is neither more nor less than the *Orthodox*. It would be strange indeed to deny that you meant to affirm this, merely because you have not here called them by name. I will not for a moment suppose you to be capable of such disingenuousness.

In the second extract above named, you suggest that 'the accusation of a persecuting spirit will be repelled on the part of the Orthodox with indignation. But you insist upon it that it is true. Fire and sword, you allege, are not the only instruments of persecution. The form may be changed, while the spirit lives.' "Persecution has indeed given up its halter and fagot; but *it breathes venom from its lips, and secretly blasts what it cannot openly destroy.*" Works, pp. 561, 562.

A terrible Hydra indeed, which has such a poisonous breath! And happy for Massachusetts, that she can furnish "a voice of strength" to reach "far and wide" enough to frighten it back to its native fen, whenever it ventures to appear and send forth its venomous and blasting breath!

In the third long extract as mentioned above, the *Inquisition* is again brought upon the tapis. 'The multitude [of the Orthodox] dare not think or speak, because [the Inquisition in the *new* form] is more terrible than that of Spain. Men are told indeed to search the Scriptures; but they know full well, that unless they find there the creed of the Orthodox, they must undergo the penalty of exclusion. All this is worse than Papal bondage. And on the ground of Congregational-

ism, the church can be little more than the tool of the minister in the business of exclusion. So all comes into the hands of the clergy; who, in order to complete the whole plan, are forming Consociations, and erecting ECCLESIASTICAL COURTS, which are to compel men to believe as they do. This is a most degrading form of vassalage, imposing on the mind the dreams and fictions of men, for the everlasting truth of God.' Works, pp. 565, 566.

The fourth extract presents an apology for your controversial efforts. This in substance is, that 'you saw assaults on freedom of thought and speech [by the Orthodox], which would have left us only the name of religious liberty. It became perilous to search the Scriptures for ourselves, and to speak our own convictions. The often reiterated idea of penalties as bad as fine and imprisonment is again introduced, [a spectre which seems to have haunted you with more than ordinary obtrusiveness and pertinacity]; and then to frighten this spectre away, your strong voice was raised, and it made its retreat.' Works, Pref. pp. vii, viii.

Here I might rest my case, having made out proof enough of the ground of complaint which I have alleged, in respect to the treatment that we have received at your hands. But that I may not seem to have fastened on a few paragraphs, and to have dealt unfairly, I proceed still farther to cite from your Works.

On p. 215, you speak of Robert Fellows' work, as 'a useful vindication of Christianity from the *gross errors* which Calvinism has laboured to identify with this divine system.'

P. 216, you speak of the "five thorny points of Calvinism," and say that "few designs are more praiseworthy, than to free Christianity from the reproach brought upon it by that system."

On the same page you assert, that "Calvinism owes its perpetuity to the influence of fear in palsying the moral nature;" that it terrifies men so "that they dare not confess, even to themselves, the shrinking, which they feel, from the unworthy views which this system gives of God; and by thus

smothering their just abhorrence, they gradually extinguish it, and even come to vindicate in God what would disgrace his creatures."

Just before the paragraph now presented, you say of Mr. Fellows' work, that "it expresses strongly and without circumlocution, *the abhorrence with which* EVERY *mind, uncorrupted by false theology*, must look on Calvinism."

Yet those who abandon Calvinism, with all these awful severities and horrible absurdities, and prefer to adopt the system in a somewhat modified or milder form, you represent, a few pages onward (p. 220), as *cowards* and *degenerate*. At least you say, that "if the stern reformer of Geneva could lift up his head" and hear their mitigated tone, he would call them so, and he would tell them that "*moderate* Calvinism is a solecism, a contradiction in terms;" by all which I understand you plainly to mean, that such as profess to be *moderate* Calvinists, are justly liable to the imputation of *cowardice*.

On p. 221, after speaking of the Westminster Assembly's Catechism and Confession, you say: "A man of plain sense, whose spirit has not been broken to this creed by education or terror, will think that it is not necessary for us to travel to heathen countries, to learn how mournfully the human mind may misrepresent the Deity." In other words, the religious creeds of the heathen can afford no more striking misrepresentations of the Deity, than the Assembly's Catechism and Confession.

On p. 402, you represent Trinitarians as 'having no right to object to the picture and symbol worship of the Roman Catholics. If Christ is God, and has a body, that body may as well be pictured as any other one; and there can be no rational objection to making use of this picture in our worship.'

On p. 405, you aver that "Trinitarianism is a riddle;" that "instead of teaching an intelligible God, it offers to the mind a strange compound of *hostile attributes, bearing plain marks of those ages of darkness, when Christianity shed but*

a faint ray, and the diseased fancy teemed with prodigies and unnatural creations."

On p. 409 you say: "We look with *horror* and grief on the views of God's government, which are naturally and intimately united with Trinitarianism. They take from us our Father in heaven, and substitute a *stern* and *unjust* lord."

On p. 415, you admit that there are some great minds among the adherents of the prevalent system [of Orthodoxy]; "but," you add, "they seem to move in chains, and to fulfil poorly their high functions of adding to the wealth of the human intellect; and you then liken them to Samson grinding in the mill of the Philistines.

On p. 423 you say, that if you believed what Trinitarians teach in regard to sin, you should "feel yourself living under a legislation unspeakably dreadful, under laws written, like Draco's, in blood; and instead of thanking the sovereign for providing an infinite substitute, you should shudder at the attributes which render this expedient necessary."

On p. 428 you say: "According to these principles [viz. those of Trinitarianism], the fanatic who exclaimed: *I believe because it is impossible*, has a fair title to canonization." "Trinitarianism links itself with several degrading errors; and its most natural reliance is with Calvinism, that cruel faith, which, stripping God of mercy and man of power, has made Christianity an instrument of torture to the timid, and an object of doubt or scorn to hardier spirits. I repeat it, a doctrine, which violates reason like the Trinity," etc.

On p. 557 you say: "Nothing is plainer, than that the leaders of the party called 'Orthodox,' have adopted and *mean to enforce a system of exclusion*, in regard to Liberal Christians."

On p. 558, the Orthodox are represented as having fallen into some of "the grossest errors."

On p. 561, the Orthodox are represented as menacing with ruin the Christian who listens to Unitarians, and as branding him with the most terrifying epithets, in order to prevent a candid inquiry into the truth.

On p. 568 you assert, that "it is a *melancholy fact*, that our long established form of Congregational church government is menaced, and TRIBUNALS *unknown to our churches,—are to be introduced for the very purpose, that the supposed errors and mistakes of ministers and private Christians may be tried and punished as heresies; that is,* AS CRIMES."

But where shall I end in making extracts of such a nature, when all of these have been taken from three short pieces in your book; and in these I have omitted as much as I have extracted that is of the like nature? I conclude the whole task of extracting, by presenting one specimen more of the manner in which you treat that doctrine, which of all that is *peculiar* to the gospel the Orthodox deem the most dear and sacred; I mean the doctrine of *atonement* by the suffering and death of Christ upon the cross. It is thus that you speak of this part of our faith:

"This doctrine of an infinite substitute, suffering the penalty of sin, to manifest God's wrath against sin, and thus to support his government, is, I fear, so familiar to us all, that its severe character is overlooked. Let me then set it before you, in new terms, and by a new illustration; and if in so doing, I may wound the feelings of some who hear me, I beg them to believe, that I do it with pain, and from no impulse but a desire to serve the cause of truth.—Suppose, then, that a teacher should come among you, and should tell you, that the Creator, in order to pardon his own children, had erected a gallows in the centre of the universe, and had publicly executed upon it, in room of the offenders, an infinite being, the partaker of his own Supreme Divinity; suppose him to declare, that this execution was appointed, as a most conspicuous and terrible manifestation of God's justice, and of the infinite wo denounced by his law; and suppose him to add, that all beings in heaven and earth are required to fix their eyes on this fearful sight, as the most powerful enforcement of obedience and virtue. Would you not tell him, that he calumniated his Maker? Would you not say to him, that this central gallows threw gloom over the universe; that the spirit of a government, whose very acts of pardon were written in such blood, was terror not paternal love; and that the obedience, which needed to be upheld by this horrible spectacle, was nothing worth? Would you not say to him, that even

you, in this infancy and imperfection of your being, were capable of being wrought upon by nobler motives, and of hating sin through more generous views; and that much more the angels, those pure flames of love, need not the gallows and an executed God, to confirm their loyalty? You would all so feel at such teaching as I have supposed; and yet how does this differ from the popular doctrine of atonement?"—pp. 423, 424.

On this last extract I deem all comment superfluous. The holy apostle who asserts that *Christ has redeemed the church by his* BLOOD; who was "*determined not to preach any thing else save Jesus Christ and him* CRUCIFIED;" who "*gloried in nothing save in the* CROSS *of Christ;*" and the redeemed in heaven who ascribe *salvation to his* BLOOD, are the proper arbiters to decide on such an awful paragraph.

And now, my dear Sir, I come to the main object of this letter. I have endeavoured to prepare the way, and come at last to the principal thing in view; with great reluctance, indeed, but still with deep conviction that duty bids me do it. I have complained that you have uttered frequent and severe accusations against us, who belong to the denomination of the Orthodox. I have shown the ground of my complaint. Permit me then to add to what I have said, by making what I deem a reasonable and proper and Christian request of you.

You have given your name to the world as the author of accusations, that *we are aiming to subvert and destroy the religious liberty of this Commonwealth; that we are combined to put down all free inquiry in matters of religion; that we are endeavouring, in secret and openly, to introduce an ecclesiastical tyranny worse than that of the Inquisition; that we are determined to raise up ecclesiastical Courts to try, condemn, and punish all whom we deem to be heretics; and thus to prevent all right of private judgment, and all freedom in respect to religious opinion.*

I have openly avowed in this letter my own opinion, and what I know to be the opinion of the Christian brethren with whom I have the honour to be associated, in relation to these subjects. I know that what I have said is incapable of being

contradicted on any grounds of evidence. *I do know that the accusations which you stand pledged to support,* ARE NOT TRUE. Before heaven and earth I aver that THEY ARE NOT TRUE. That they are accusations of a hurtful tendency, need not be said. They go to destroy all respect for us, all confidence in us, all prospects of our usefulness in society or in the church, just so far as you are believed; and to render us the objects of suspicion, of scorn, and of hatred. As injured men, as injured in a manner that is highly unjust and cruel, we call on you either for reparation, or else to support your charges. These charges are *allegations as to matters of* FACT. They are not matters of opinion merely, or the deductions which may be drawn from opinions. As *matters of fact,* you are bound to support them. According to all demands of propriety and justice, you have no liberty now to retreat, by professing disdain of your opponents; none to screen yourself under the allegation, (as you have attempted in the preface to your Works to do), that you dislike controversy. On every ground of equity, you must either support the charges which you have made, *as to facts;* or take them back; or else stand before the public as one who has abused and maltreated his fellow beings, members of the same Commonwealth, entitled to the same privileges with himself, and having a right to claims that they shall be spoken of with *truth* and *justice;* a right which cannot be violated without responsibility for so doing.

Sir, we have borne these charges in silence long enough—so long that not a few of your friends begin to aver, that silence gives consent to the truth of them. You have repeated them so often and for such a series of years, without being called in question in some important respects for so doing, that you seem of late to have considered the right of doing it as a matter quite beyond the reach of debate. You do not seem to expect, that the objects of your vehement and scornful denunciation, will venture to resist or even to complain. Like those subdued by the irresistible power of the great Assyrian king, "not a bird would move the wing,

or open the mouth, or peep." But if you have believed this respecting us, you have erred, at least in one point, with regard to your views of the Orthodox. We have not been cowering with fear; we have "held our peace for good." We acknowledge, indeed, that when "we have meditated on some of these things, the fire has burned within us." But if we have been trespassers in this respect, kindly put it to the score of human infirmity. After all, however, there are times when it becomes a duty to call on those who assail us with bitter reproaches, who endeavour to hold us up to the scorn and ridicule of the world, who accuse us of crimes which *in foro conscientiæ* would be properly adjudged to be *high treason against the religious liberties of this Commonwealth*, so long as we profess to be citizens of it, and have sworn to maintain its constitution and its rights. There are boundaries beyond which it is not the duty of the peaceable and the inoffensive to go, in tolerating abuse of this nature without demanding a reparation. We have come to those bounds. We allege before the world that we have been slandered and abused by your writings; we appeal to the particulars; we offer the evidence; and we now appeal to every honest and candid man of any party, to judge whether we have not supported our charge, that you have made and often repeated such accusations against us.

If now you can establish the *facts* which you have alleged, and which go to make up the charges in question, in respect to the Orthodox as a body in this Commonwealth, confession and humiliation in this whole affair undoubtedly will belong to us. If you cannot prove it of the *whole*, then the sweeping accusations which you have made are to be modified, greatly modified. If you can prove it only of a few solitary individuals, called by the name of Orthodox, but who in fact are extravagant and reckless men, this will be little to your purpose, and nothing to ours. We wash our hands of such orthodoxy. Our orthodoxy bids us to be peaceable members of the State, true friends of our government, advocates of religious liberty even at the peril of life and property, and

of this too in its highest and most extensive rational sense. We are *Congregationalists*, as we profess to be. We have no prejudices, indeed, against the Presbyterian or other forms of church government, which our brethren of orthodox denominations in this Commonwealth, or in any part of our country, see fit to adopt. It is our belief that the gospel has not *prescribed exclusively* any particular form of church government; but that this is left to expediency as times and circumstances may require. Nor are those who may differ from ourselves in respect to the regimen of the churches, therefore to be involved any more than we, in the charges which you have preferred against the Orthodox. They have no such objects in view, as you charge upon us all; and they would not only disclaim them, but contend most strenuously against them.

But in respect to such of us as profess to be Congregationalists, neither yourself nor any man on earth has a right to deny that we are sincere in this profession. How then can we have it in view to erect *ecclesiastical judicatories and courts which are to try and punish heretics as criminals?* Why, Sir, the suggestion of such a thing among *Congregationalists*, is just as if one were to ask, under the present form of our government in this State: 'What day is appointed for the *coronation* of the Governor?' And the fact that you even suggest such a thing, shows, either that you regard us as hypocrites in professing to be Congregationalists; or—shall I say it—that you make assertions of this nature, without even knowing what Congregationalism admits or rejects.

My belief is, that you cannot make your charges good, against any man in this State who bears the name of Orthodox. Still I must be understood as asserting no farther than I have evidence before me. In regard to that class of the Orthodox at which you have aimed your accusations, *I fearlessly assert that you cannot possibly make them good.* And in this class, I would comprehend *laymen* as well as *clergymen*. I have the pleasure of a personal acquaintance somewhat extensive, among the men who are active in promoting

the interests of orthodoxy in Massachusetts. I know that you have wronged them in your charges, and that you are utterly unable to support these charges.

You will ask me, perhaps, why I should select *you* as the object of this call and of this complaint. My answer is ready. You have been ingenuous enough to give your name to the world, as a pledge that you will support the charges which you have made. I commend you most sincerely for this. It is a pledge, that you do not mean to act in the dark, and that you are not afraid to take on you the responsibility of what you affirm. I regard it also as a satisfactory testimonial, that you believe in the truth of what you have alleged. I would not for a moment have it understood, that in denying the charges which you have brought, I mean to implicate you in the charge of uttering *intentional* falsehood. Sir, I know of nothing in your life or writings, much as I dissent from many things which you have said, that would justify me in making such an assertion. I should deem it inexcusable in myself, not to explain what I say in such a manner, that I shall not be understood by any one as making an allegation of this nature against you; nor will I allow the objection to be made to me, that I have assailed you with such a complaint. But this does not make our case any better, but rather the worse. The openness and sincerity with which you proclaim your opinions, are the very means of making them current, with such a part of the public as have no personal acquaintance with our views and feelings and motives. If it were known, or even suspected, that you made such charges as a mere party fetch, the mischief of them would at once be prevented. But now, you do the thing with so much openness, and zeal, and sincerity; and withal hold such a rank in the opinion of the public as to uprightness, and veracity, and candour; that the allegations which you make that are erroneous, become dangerous and injurious ones. The fact that you are sincere in making them, then, is no reason why we who are exposed to injury by them, should not insist that they must be either made good or retracted. It furnishes the weightier reason

why we should do so. And the fact that you have given your name to the world, is a public pledge that you stand ready to support them. You cannot complain then that we make the call on you to do this.

As to the *anonymous* accusations which are a thousand times repeated, from the more stately Review down to the insignificant newspaper and two-penny pamphlet, we have more important concerns in which we ought to be engaged than in answering them. At all events, I shall never trouble them with any calls of this nature.

One other reason I would assign, why I have made the call on you to support the accusations which you have made against us. It is this, viz. that if we are to give credence to the testimony of your friends, you are the head or leader of the Unitarian party in this State. So the partial friend, who has recently made your defence against the criticisms of the Edinburgh Review, has stated to the world. "Dr. Channing, as our readers are generally aware, *is the acknowledged leader of the Unitarian sect*, as far as there can be leaders, etc." North Amer. Review, July 1830. p. 46. Taking this statement (which has often before been virtually made) to be correct, and knowing that what you say and publish is reëchoed, and republished, and applauded, so often and to such a wide extent, we have a right to request, nay to demand from you the reason, why you endeavour so extensively to injure us and to bring us into suspicion, or into contempt and hatred.

What sort of impression you make on your admirers, is sufficiently evident from another passage on the same page of the N. Amer. Review which I have quoted. The writer there says: "Dr. Channing has no doubt *uniformly observed the decorum*, which belongs to his character and feelings, as well as to his position, *and has treated his opponents with* PERFECT LIBERALITY." p. 46. Who the writer of this Review is, I know not. He is evidently a man of talents and knowledge, and no more prejudiced, I presume, against the Orthodox, that many others, who, like himself, know nothing

about them. He receives with implicit belief what you say respecting them. He even commends you for "*perfect liberality*" towards them. As a matter of common justice to his fellow citizens, we have a right now to solicit, that he would peruse the evidence collected in this letter of your "perfect liberality and decorum;" then to put himself for a moment in our condition, and ask: Whether this is the measure of "decorum and liberality" which he would like to have exercised towards himself? The complaints which he makes of the British Reviews, and makes with great justice and force too, as to not a few things, have respect to mere trifles compared with those things of which we feel compelled to make complaint against you.

In the general tenor of his remarks, by way of vindicating your works against the criticisms of the Edinburgh Reviewer, I concur. The flippant impudence, (if I may venture to speak what I feel), the superficial criticism, the illiberal spirit, and the palpable mistakes in literary taste and judgment, which the Scotch Reviewer seems to me to betray, hardly render his work worth the notice bestowed upon it in our own at present more able and respectable Review. I have no sympathies with *such* foreign criticism; no blindness, I trust, to the merits and excellencies of your writings in many important respects. I could almost say: "Ubi bene, nemo melius." Indeed, I do fully and heartily say this, of a great many passages in them. I have as much satisfaction in the claims of America to notice, in consequence of your writings, as the Reviewer himself. But then, I have complaints to make which he has either wholly overlooked, or which he is not disposed to acknowledge as well founded. He will pardon me for thus *criticising* on his *criticism*, and believe me when I say of the North American as a whole: *Non invideo, miror magis.* I could even add, on account of some of the pieces in this work: *I nostrum decus!*

But to return; the mischief of which we complain, in consequence of lending your name to sanction accusations against us, does not stop within the narrow circle of Massachusetts.

For example; the editor of the *American Quarterly* and *National Gazette*, has every now and then retailed, secretly or openly, accusations against "*the bigots*" of the North, which are copied from you, or echoed in the spirit fostered by reading your works. It comes, however, not with a very good grace from him. If he is a *true* son of the Romish Church to which he *professes* to belong, it is indeed "passing strange" that he should rail at the bigotry of us Protestants and Puritans. A man who professes to believe in the infallibility of the Pope, in the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament, in purgatory, in the *plena indulgentia* which is to be purchased for a few pence and which stands advertised on every conspicuous street-corner of the *eternal city;* who of course, if he is sincere in all this, must, on the same authority, believe equally in the relics of the cross, in the transportation by angels of the chapel of my Lady of Loretto, and in the miraculous liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius, with a multitude of other things of the like nature; and who, as a true son of the same church, must bow with cheerful acquiescence in the Bull of the late Pius at Rome, the "Vicar of God and successor of St. Peter," dated Aug. 7, 1814, which, after the Jesuits had been suppressed for forty years by another *infallible* Pontiff, not only restores them to all their rights and privileges, but declares, that "if any one shall infringe, or by an audacious temerity oppose any part of this ordinance [the Bull in question], let him know that he will thereby incur the INDIGNATION of ALMIGHTY GOD, and of the HOLY APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL" —I say a man who sincerely believes all this, is not altogether the right man to rail at the bigotry of orthodox Congregationalists in Massachusetts. And if he be not sincere in his profession of being a genuine and dutiful son of his mother Church, but professes to be what he is not, then his sneers or his scoffs are matters which we can make up our minds to endure with very comfortable equanimity.*

* This gentleman has, for some time past, had his location in Paris; where he seems to leave the Puritans in peace, and finds little occasion,

And now, my dear Sir, can you believe me, when I declare, that in all which I have said above, I have no *personal* aim at you? It is true that I have called on you *personally;* for how could I possibly avoid this, when my whole letter is concerned with allegations that you have made? But as to exciting a spirit of hostility or bitterness against you as a man, I disclaim openly any such intention; it would be unworthy of the cause which I profess to advocate; it would be unbecoming my place, or the character which I would wish to bear. Is there no separation that can be made by the public, between calling in question allegations and charges, and personal malignity towards those who make them? I trust there is; at least, in my own case, I certainly hope there is. I am not behind some of your more sober and judicious friends, in my approbation and admiration of many things in your writings. In all your and my personal intercourse, on the occasion of a discussion some years since, I had no personal reasons to complain of you. I would hope that you can say the same of me. I am sure that I bear you no ill will; I am certain too, that I am very far from cherishing disrespect for your talents. I say this fully and freely, because I am anxious to be rightly understood. My complaint is, of the injury which your charges are adapted to do us; of what I believe to be utterly unfounded allegations against our character and designs; of being held up by you to the public, as conspirators against its sacred liberties. Justice, truth, a proper regard to our good name and usefulness, all demand that the charges against us should be examined, and that they should either be substantiated or retracted.

I could wish the call on you to do this had fallen into better hands than mine. But as the unpleasant task has not to my knowledge been undertaken, I have ventured upon it through a sense of duty. I can only appeal to the good sense, and

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I trust, to scoff at the *multitude* of sermons which the Clergy there write and deliver. I owe him no ill will; but there are some things in his publications, during the time that has now gone by, which, perhaps, 'dying he would wish to blot.'

equity, and candour of the community, for a justification of my course. If these condemn me, then let me stand condemned. If not, then I shall at least have the satisfaction of believing that what I have done may contribute to bring more into the light certain matters, which it has now become high time our community should more fully understand.

Allow me in closing this communication, (already protracted far beyond my original intention), to say a few things in reference to the great contest which is going on between Unitarianism and Orthodoxy in this part of our country. Your place as the leader of the Unitarian party, (you will pardon me for saying this which I copy from your friends), renders it of some importance, that you should be possessed of just and definite views in regard to some great points of deep conviction and feeling among us. We have no secrets to keep in relation to these matters; and therefore I will frankly state them.

First of all we do sincerely believe in the great Protestant maxim, that THE SCRIPTURES ARE THE SUFFICIENT AND ONLY RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE. We do not regard them as secondary and inferior, or a mere supplementary edition of the laws of nature. What they reveal, we take as our creed, *our only creed.* We do not reject the use of symbols of faith and catechisms; but we assign no authority or validity to them any farther than as we believe them to be a true representation of God's word. In heart and soul we agree with the *great doctrines* of the Reformers, of Calvin and Luther. We do so because we believe them to be contained in the Bible, not because we rely at all on any authority of these great men. But we do not hold ourselves bound to defend the same doctrines which they embraced, by the same specific reasons in all cases which they employed in defending them. We have no scruple in rejecting some of their reasons, and of employing better ones when we can find them. Neither do we feel bound to their technology or diction in all cases. Much of this depended on the logic of the day, on the metaphysics of the schools, and on the

state of questions controverted between them and the Romanists. The key to many a proposition in their writings, is to be found only by knowing against what errors these propositions were directed; a truth almost entirely overlooked by the greater part of their opponents at the present time; but one which is so obvious, that the overlooking it is well nigh inexcusable. Many an assertion in their writings, which is now brought forward as unjust and "monstrous and horrible," melts down into plain and simple truth that every rational Protestant must own, when examined with the caution that I have suggested, and which a common share of candour demands should be exercised.

We are *Calvinists*, if you please to call us so, although we do not court the name. Nor do we refuse it, if it seem good to our opponents to bestow it. But we do not receive *every thing* which Calvin taught; nor any thing because he taught it. We hold ourselves at liberty, and that without being justly subjected to the charge of "disingenuousness and cowardice," to reject some things which seem to us quite unimportant in the system of the Reformers; and to reject their reasons in support of other things which we receive, just so often as we find them, on examination, turn out to be insufficient.

We say the same things in respect to our Pilgrim Fathers. We mean to be their "sons in faith," as we are their sons by descent. But this binds us not to all their modes of reasoning, nor to all their views in respect to matters not essential to the existence and prosperity of true Christianity.

Having adopted these principles, not from tradition, not from catechisms and creeds, not from "the fear of what is worse than the fetters and dungeons of the Inquisition," but from what we believe to be calm and dispassionate inquiry into the Scriptures, from what we know to be long-continued and diligent investigation of them, we have made up our minds to stand fast in the liberty wherewith we believe Christ has made us free, in maintaining the system of doctrine which is denominated *Evangelical* or *Orthodox*. This indeed is very diverse, in not a few important respects, from what you

and some of your friends represent it to be. Some years since, my respected friend and colleague, the Rev. Dr. Woods, brought forward against you the allegation of misrepresenting our doctrines, and called on you to make good the charge, or to retract it. Of this call, for reasons best known to yourself, you thought proper to take no notice. Yet the call must, on all hands, be admitted to be just and proper. You recently tell us in your preface, that your reasons for not answering such calls were, that you might not be involved in personal controversy; that you must have "*spoken with great freedom*," and "set down as a grave moral offence, the disingenuousness so common at the present day, which, under pretence of maintaining old opinions, so disguises and discolours them, that they can with difficulty be recognized." But if such be the fact in regard to your opponents, why not prove this to the world, by adducing legitimate and satisfactory evidence? In such an age and such a country as ours, where everything may be and must be examined, it is presuming pretty largely on the public credulity, to suppose that assertions will stand for arguments, and high and exasperated denunciation for patient labour of investigating and proving in detail. It is what neither yourself, nor any other man in America, has any right to claim or expect.

But besides those doctrines of the Orthodox which have been misrepresented and misunderstood, there are others, no doubt, which are opposed and denied in the very respects in which we believe them to be true.

I proceed, however, with my remarks of a more general nature. In the present state of conviction and feeling among the Orthodox, which results from examination and full persuasion, it cannot be rationally expected, that we should accede to every contradiction of our principles, or succumb to every tempest that assaults us. *There is one way, and one only, to annihilate all the Orthodoxy of the State; and this is, to show by the fair and established laws of interpretation, that the Bible does not support it.* All else will fail of its end. We do in good faith believe that the Bible is the word of

God; and that it is our supreme, authoritative, infallible, and only guide. We cannot be convinced, therefore, that it is our duty to relinquish what we regard as its plain and unequivocal decisions, in order to embrace what we regard as the speculations of men, and the maxims of fashionable philosophy. We do not concede the propriety of allowing *a priori* notions and assertions to take the place of what the sacred writers have decided. We are not acquainted with any man, whose word is law or gospel to us. We would receive no apothegms, because they are asserted with an air of confidence, and in glowing and vehement language, or in eloquent strains. A man to enjoy our religious confidence, must give some good evidence that he loves, and reverences, and has deeply studied, his Bible. We submit implicitly to Paul, and Peter, and others like them; but in all other cases, we stop to ask the *why* and the *wherefore*.

Sir, you have mistaken the Orthodox Community of Massachusetts. They care as little for bringing in the dark ages as you do. They are a great deal farther from commending the faith of those who are laboring to extend the superstitions of *Rome* in our community than yourself, if the softened tones, in which you speak of the advocates of these superstitions, are to be taken as the index of your feelings.

Nor are the Orthodox to be diverted from their purpose, by language of severe reproach and unmeasured indignation. The sons of those, who left country and kindred to brave the storms of the ocean in frail barks, to face the gloomy horrors of the wintry blasts and storms in a savage land and in a boundless forest, and who did all this cheerfully that they might hold fast their orthodox faith, and worship God according to it—the sons of such men, holding to the same principles, and believing them to be the only foundation of their eternal hopes—are not to be diverted from their course by obloquy and denunciation, however eloquent and severe. With them RELIGION IS ALL. The world and all its concerns vanish into insignificance, when they come into comparison with the "glory that is to be revealed." It cannot be

expected, then, if they are in any measure what they profess to be, that they should be overawed or daunted by denunciation or opposition. No, Sir; these will not accomplish the purpose at which they aim. It is not that the Orthodox are insensible to what their fellow beings think and say of them. Far from this. There is much more sensibility among them on this subject than I could wish. I cannot withhold my hearty commendation, however, of very many of them, for checking these feelings, and putting restraint upon them. But still, they know when they are mal-treated. They know when their rights are denied under cover of law; when they are excluded from the literary and civil privileges and offices of the State; when they are jeered at in private circles. and pointed at with the finger of scorn in public. With all this they have borne, and borne long; I do not say that they have always done this with such patience and meekness as became them. I am afraid that this is not the case. But depend on it, Sir, there is a secret flame kindled in this Commonwealth, by such measures as I have named above on your part and that of your friends, which, though smothered long, cannot always be smothered. Justice, and fairness, and equality of rights, must at last become the order of the day. Well will it be for the peace of this community, if the season when this shall take place should not be long protracted. There is always danger in a smothered sense of injustice and oppression; above all, when this is the fact with respect to great numbers, who belong to the leading class of men in the community; danger to those who feel it, as well as to others. May Heaven avert its consequences from our beloved Commonwealth!

I shall be entirely misunderstood, if I am supposed to utter these things *in terrorem*. I know well that our opponents are not men to be influenced in this way. It is the last method that I should adopt, in order to influence them. I say these things merely as one who loves his country and his Commonwealth, and the happy form of government under which he lives, and who fears the consequences of anything

which may have a tendency to disturb our peace. But the time has come, when the whole truth should be openly told. Depend on it, Sir, there is a smothered sense of deep injury among the Orthodox, both of civil and religious injury, which needs to be allayed by a return to the principles of justice, and equal rights, and kind discussion, on the part of those who are striving to crush them. We look to Switzerland; we see the wandering exile pastors there thrust out from their country, or languishing in dungeons, and their families begging their bread, because these dauntless heralds of salvation have dared to preach Christ and him crucified. We cannot help knowing that Unitarianism has done this; and consequently we are slow to receive professions of *liberality*, as certain evidence of its existence. We *fear* that there are not wanting in our own State, some who would not scruple to walk in the steps of their *liberal* brethren abroad; some whose standing argument against our principles is, that Calvin burned Servetus; but who unluckily have never read the ecclesiastical history of Geneva in the nineteenth century. Far, very far, are we from reproaching the Unitarians as a body, in our State, with such views and wishes. On the contrary, we do verily believe that a few of the more intolerant among them, are altogether deceived as to the feelings of their brethren. We do not believe that the majority are prepared for those *ultra* measures, to which they are occasionally urged. They would abhor the idea of oppressing and abusing us, would they but candidly and patiently examine the whole matter. We must still hope that they will do this, before they proceed to further measures; and that after all, the present appearances in our State, which are portentous of storm and tempest, will be dissipated, and unclouded sunshine follow. At least we hope this. And that this great end may be accomplished, we would earnestly beseech all who love the peace and prosperity of society and the church, to direct their fervent unceasing supplications to Him, who "maketh the winds and the waves to obey his voice," who is

"King of kings and Lord of lords," who is "seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high," and is GOD OVER ALL AND BLESSED FOREVER.

I am, my dear Sir, notwithstanding any difference of sentiment and feeling, with much respect, and with the most sincere wishes for your happiness in time and eternity,

Your friend and obedient servant,

MOSES STUART.

Andover, July, 1830.

POSTSCRIPT.

The sixteen years which have passed away, since the preceding Letter was published, have made some alteration in the state of things among us, although they have not brought about any radical and thorough change. It is my apprehension, so far as I have a knowledge of religious matters in general in this Commonwealth, that the tone and demeanor of Unitarianism toward Orthodoxy has, for some time past, considerably softened, and become more urbane. The separation which took place as to ministerial exchanges and intercommunion of religious services in 1810—1816, after being for a long time strenuously resisted, and frequently indeed even loaded with indignant obloquy, has, since that period, been generally acquiesced in with comparative quiet, and has come at last to be almost universally considered as a matter of course. It is only now and then that a solitary voice is raised, at present, in the way of declamation against it.

Indeed, in looking back upon this whole scene, in which I have to some small extent been an actor, I can scarcely realize now, in what way resistance to such a measure should have become so warm and impassioned as it once was. When such men as Dr. Channing published to the world, that the faith of Calvinists was a compound of absurdity, superstition, and blasphemy; when the God whom the Orthodox worship was represented as a devil in his purposes and measures; when the *cross of Christ* was set forth as a gallows for a criminal, erected and exposed to the view of an astounded universe; when the wor-

ship of the Son and Holy Ghost was reproached as idolatry and enthusiasm; when, in a word, all the peculiar *doctrines of grace*, (so named by the Orthodox), were loudly pronounced to be visionary and unreasonable and incredible and revolting; why should those who published and preached and talked all this, find fault with the Orthodox for *withdrawing fellowship*? Independently of all sacred regard to *scriptural* doctrine which they at least profess to cherish, I should say that they must be more or less than men, willingly to keep themselves very long within close proximity to such scorching flames as these. Why did not the common sense and reason of Unitarians lead them, at that period, seriously to ask: 'How can two walk together, *unless they are agreed*?' Of course, I do not mean to extend the operation of the principle, to which this question appeals, to all minute and comparatively unimportant matters in religion, as a zealous and bigoted partisan might be prone to do, but to the *great*, the *distinctive*, the *fundamental* principles of the Christian religion as such. If the Orthodox do, in their most sober judgment, regard the departure of Unitarians from these principles as a virtual renunciation of the *distinctive* elements of the Christian religion, (as they truly do), then what remains for them, if they act with any kind of consistency, but to separate peaceably from Unitarians, in their religious services and rites? Not to do this, would be to show, either that they were not sincere in their professed belief, or that, if sincere, they still regarded their principles as of very little consequence. That as a body they are sincere in their belief, is my full persuasion. But if so, how can they possibly look on such matters as have been and are in dispute as being of little consequence; so little, indeed, that the right of yielding them, or of overlooking them, may be exercised, whenever comity or etiquette may seem to make such a demand? All this is fairly out of question. They are, as I believe, in sober earnest; and if so, ought they not, must they not, demean themselves accordingly? He who is consistent in contending for religious liberty, must surely allow to them the liberty of *rejecting* some opinions, as well as of receiving some others. Why should another man's belief compel me to relinquish mine, or to regard or treat that which I am fully persuaded is essential and fundamental, as if it were of little or no consequence, and a thing that may be dispensed with at pleasure?

On the other hand; I have never been able fully to understand, why Unitarians should have been so zealous and earnest to continue *fellowship* with the Orthodox. *Fellowship* with those,

who, as they affirm, gloat over the superstitions and conceits of the dark ages! With those who worship a *devil* instead of the true God! With those who are virtually guilty of *idolatry* in worshipping the Son and the Spirit! With those who are striving to subject their fellow men to a bondage worse than that under the Inquisition! The old adage says, that "a man is known *by the company he keeps.*" Had they no fears of being found in fellowship and company with such impiety and bigotry and slavish and degraded superstition? In fact, considering what they wrote and published respecting the sentiments of the Orthodox, it is one of the most inexplicable things in all the history of this Commonwealth, whether ecclesiastical or civil, that they so zealously and perseveringly insisted on the most intimate religious communion with the Orthodox, and were so indignant at its being refused. I have looked in vain for the satisfactory solution of such a problem, to the usual workings of the human mind. I am able to find but two things, which aid me in any measure to account for the occurrence in question; and neither of these, it is probable, will be admitted by Unitarians. The one of these is, that religion is a by-the-by and secondary affair in the business of life, which may be accommodated in any way, and therefore need not be made so much of as the Orthodox profess to make of it; the other is, that the Unitarians of that period did not relish the idea of being held up before the public, as differing both from the opinions of the Pilgrim Fathers and from that of the majority of their fellow citizens, lest it might throw some hindrances in the way of their success. Most of the Orthodox are inclined, perhaps, to the opinion, that both of these causes were combined, in bringing about the effect under consideration.

Under the dynasty of Judge Parsons and Dr. Kirkland, two sagacious and very expert leaders, the Unitarian party became so strong, that at last their *fears* vanished; and since that, they have for the most part gradually and peaceably settled down, on the plan of *agreeing to differ*. This has saved the public from much useless agitation. I trust that this tacit and implied compact between Unitarians and the Orthodox, will remain undisturbed for the future, and the more so, as they have at last, (for such seems to be the opinion of a predominant majority among them), given birth to and raised up a new progeny of so-named *heretics*, although of their own sect. With these truant children they seem at present to be more occupied and concerned than with us, and they are often more indignant at them. We may

now congratulate ourselves, perhaps, on at least a little breathing spell, as I would hope, from the arduous struggles of the arena. In the mean time, left for the moment to our peace, we will stand quietly by, and look on to see how *liberally* the Liberalists can treat each other. We are curious, as spectators, to know how an *excommunication for doctrine's sake* can be brought about, where there is not only no creed, but where eternal war is proclaimed and waged against all creeds. *Dies indicabit.* Till then, we will thank God for our comfortable rest, and take courage also. But—we shall take care to keep our arms in sight. We have no intention to put away, and suffer to rust, the panoply that as soldiers of the cross we ought to wear. We confidently expect, that, as soon as the revolting province in the domain of Unitarianism shall be subdued or exscinded, the whole forces of the empire will again be turned upon us; and probably with a skill and vigour which have been sharpened by contest. Let no Orthodox man then sleep upon his post. The ocean that is quite calm where we are sailing to-day, may be speedily visited by tempest and tornado again, and the waves roll mountain-high. But if it must be so, we will humbly hope, and even confidently believe, that there is One who sits at the head of our little barque, who can arise and say to the winds and the waves: 'Peace! Be still!' and they will obey him.

As a general thing, I should think that the laws of comity and urbanity, between the two great religious parties, are coming nearer and nearer to a gentlemanly and Christian shape. We are gradually coming nearer to the point of *agreeing to differ.* I strongly suspect, that the younger part of the Unitarian community now look back with astonishment on the *fellowship* battles which their fathers fought, and that they cannot well imagine, why they were not contented to manage their own affairs in their own way, and to let their neighbours do the same.

So far so good. But there are some important things that remain, and of which it is time for some one to speak out in earnest. The *exclusive* scheme of managing Cambridge University as belonging solely to the Unitarians, has become, at last, matter of discussion in the highest Court to which this whole concern is amenable. The discussions there have already told some secrets; or at least, they have brought to light things which had long been kept *sub rosa.* The result thus far, constituted as that tribunal is, has of course been in favour of the Unitarian measures. In particular, the last winter witnessed one event, which ought to be the subject of serious reflection to ev-

ery orthodox man in the Commonwealth. This is, the *acceptance* of a Report, in favour of the *permanent* connection and union of the University of Cambridge with the Unitarian Theological Seminary there. Our leading judges, it seems, have given an opinion, that the donations to this Seminary are so conditioned, that the two Institutions cannot be legally severed. I have good grounds for believing, that this is against the *wishes* of many Unitarians, even of some leading persons among them. But the leading jurisconsults tell us that the matter is decided, and cannot be changed without a violation of law and forfeiture of funds. For one, I deeply regret this. Not because I would deny to Unitarians the privilege of having a Theological Seminary of their own. Far from it. I would as readily give to them liberty to do this, as concede it to the Orthodox; for in this country they have the same right to build up Seminaries of their own. But there are other difficulties respecting this matter, and they deserve serious attention from the candid of all parties.

The University belongs to the STATE of Massachusetts. Yet if I send a son there, he must attend the worship, at least morning and evening, which is conducted by Unitarian theological Professors or Instructors. He may indeed by special favour obtain liberty, as I understand the matter, to worship elsewhere on the Sabbath. But the *normal* condition of collegiate standing obliges him to be completely and exclusively under Unitarian teaching and influence, both scientific and religious.

What right, now, in the first place, have the Corporation of this *State* University, to put it exclusively under the management of *Unitarianism?* It would be quite in vain to allege, that there are no other competent instructors. What right have they to oblige an orthodox man to subject his son wholly to this influence, during immeasurably the most plastic period of human life? What right to subject the parent in question, who is a member of this Commonwealth, to the expense and trouble of sending his sons to another State, or to a distant Institution, in order that he may discharge what he regards as a sacred paternal duty to his children? Liberty to worship abroad on the *Sabbath!* Why, this does not involve a tenth part of the influences brought to bear upon the mind of a youth while at College. Why then offer us such an inefficient anodyne for our solicitude, in respect to a matter of such fearful interest? No; we cannot accept it. We know too much of the influence of academic life, and of the yielding and moldable state of the young, to trust to it.

I am fully aware of the usual answer to all this, by alleging, that the University does not act the part of *religious* instruction, excepting merely to those students who have finished their primary collegiate course, and have devoted themselves to the study of theology. But, conceding for the moment that this statement is true, how does it, or can it, relieve our main difficulty? *The want of any positive religious influence*, would be an evil scarcely less than the positive influence of Unitarianism, and one which a truly pious parent would wish of all things to avoid. If, on the other hand, there is more or less of positive religious influence, (and not to suppose this would be even absurd, where all, or nearly all, the officers and instructors are Unitarian), then why is it not the imperious duty of a Christian parent, who sincerely adopts the views of the Orthodox, not voluntarily to expose his children to it? How can he be blamed for sending his sons to another more congenial institution? Or rather, how could he be excused at the bar of religious conscience, if he did not?

What then is to be done? Or, if I may be permitted to give the question another shape: What *ought* to be done? This certainly is a graver question than most persons seem to be aware of. Without any overweening confidence in my own judgment or ability to answer it, I would most respectfully, and with feelings of kindness and good will to all, make a few suggestions.

Shall the whole body of the Guardians and Instructors at Cambridge be changed, and *Orthodox* men be appointed in their place? No; for this would be for us to do the very same thing that we complain of in the Unitarians. It would be altogether a party and sectarian measure. Shall *all* sects then in the Commonwealth, Universalists, Abner Kneeland's men, Fanny Wright's suitors, the *Come-out-ers*, the Hegelian Transcendentalists, the Parkerites, the Swedenborgians, *et id genus omne*, have their representatives in the University, and at least a place in one of the Boards, or among the Faculty? 'Why not?' it is asked, 'for *all these* belong to the *State*.' In theory, I readily acknowledge that I find it difficult to answer this question in the negative. But still I have an instinctive feeling, that I must divest myself of all respect for the Court of the Muses, before I can give my *practical* assent to such an arrangement. It would indeed be the utter ruin of the respectability of the University; and in my most sober judgment, it would be a crying sin against heaven and our country, to ruin an institution so noble as that.

Here then is one of the predicaments, in which every reasoning man is loth to find himself placed. I argue against the management of Cambridge College for the last forty years, that it has been altogether *sectarian*, while the Institution belongs to the State. And yet I revolt from my position, when I come to such an exigency as that which I have just presented. Is not this blowing hot and cold with the same breath? Or at best, is not any distinction that I can make, as tenuous as in one of the astronomical demonstrations, which connects important deductions or corollaries with the unassignable difference between an infinitesimal portion of a vanishing circle and of a vanishing right line, and holds them, at the moment of vanishing, to be *equal*?

I frankly acknowledge the *theoretical* difficulty. But there are at least some *facts* about this matter, which are plain. Orthodoxy founded the College; originally endowed it; held exclusive possession of it until the last generation, or last but one; and always considered it as its most important auxiliary in maintaining the opinions and practices of the Pilgrim Fathers. For some half a century past, Unitarians have immensely increased its funds and possessions and apparatus of all kinds, and its buildings. They have on this ground a claim upon it superior to all others. What candid and honest man would deny them their rights in this respect?

But what shall be *done*? What *can be done*, in a state of things so embarrassing? This *practical* question is now the great one. I will not undertake to answer this question for my Orthodox brethren. I have no right to do this; for I am not at all their authorized representative. But I will venture to express my own thoughts and wishes, in a brief and respectful manner. Others of course have the same right to express theirs.

I would say at once: Give up the University to the Unitarians; for they have the strongest claims upon it, on the ground of endowments. But on the other hand, Unitarians should give up to the Orthodox, all the funds which this denomination have ever contributed, and all the books and apparatus which they formerly collected, or at least the value of them, and also the value of the buildings which they erected, and their proportion of the donations which the *State* has made to the University. This seems to me to be a plain demand of justice and reason. I am well aware, that it cannot be enforced by *law*; and there are very many other things, just and reasonable, which the law cannot be brought to bear upon and enforce. I appeal

therefore to the high Court of *Equity*, to the common sense of justice; to the principle of *doing as we would be done by;* and especially to the principle of generosity. The Unitarians are wealthy enough to endow a dozen Universities and more, in this Commonwealth, and yet in no sensible measure impoverish themselves. It is my belief, that, if they could be led to see the exigency, they are liberal enough to do what it requires. If the Orthodox give up the delightful location at Cambridge, with all its associations so dear to the sons of Muses, is not this sacrifice enough on their part, even if they receive all which has been named above?

I am not able to see why it is not a great mistake, yea even a folly, to carry on the contest about Cambridge any longer, after the manner of times that are past. It answers no possible good end. It results in the disappointment and chagrin of many on the one hand, and in somewhat perhaps of supercilious exultation on the part of some on the other. It is therefore worse than useless. Give up the whole concern, I would say to my Orthodox brethren, to those who are already in possession of the premises, provided they will deal generously with you.—May I be pardoned for saying this aloud, to all who sympathize with me in religious sentiment?

I know there are some, on both sides, who will not relish this view of the subject. Some Unitarians, even of truly liberal feelings, would regret to see the College thrown into the hands of only one Sect, believing that it would help to diminish its reputation and influence. I honour this feeling; but I cannot believe that it rests on a solid basis. After all that has been said against the Orthodox by Unitarians among us, (as developed in the preceding pages), in respect to their superstition, ignorance, idolatry, and bigotry, and their aim virtually to introduce an Inquisition among us, it is not to be reasonably expected that they will in general send their sons to be educated at Cambridge, while under the exclusive influence of Unitarianism. I think they cannot be persuaded to do so, as a general thing; above all, while such a system of rigid exclusion is there pursued in the appointments to office. Then it seems to be obvious, that the mixture of *two influences* there, would either put the College into a state of violent contest, or spoil all positive good influences, by neutral insignificance. I can never think of such a plan with any good degree of approbation. I know that the like has been, and is, extensively done in Germany. But there the human mind is tamely submissive to governmental

arrangements; and there too, where contest has not fiercely raged in consequence of such an arrangement, *Indifferentism* has become an overwhelming tide, bearing all away before it. New Englanders are incapable of such a state of things. The mixture in question might indeed answer a part of the claims of the mere *theory* of rights. But as a *practical* measure, I doubt not that it would be fraught with mischief, in one or both of the ways already stated.

Let us behave then like rational men, and like gentlemen, in such a state of things, and make the best of it that we can. Let us at least *agree to differ*. Let each go his own way, and leave to Providence the disposal of future events. My belief, at least my hope, is, that there are minds generous enough among the Unitarians, to accede to such proposals.

I know not, indeed, how these views may strike the present Head of Cambridge University; for I have not seen him since his return from Europe, and have in no way any particular knowledge of his own personal views. Of course I shall not undertake to state them. But this I well know, viz. that he possesses the most ample accomplishments of literature, science, and taste, for the station that he occupies, and that his life is free from any stain. My belief is, that he is of a truly liberal cast of mind, and that he would not lift up one finger to do sectarian violence, or inflict wrong upon the rights and just claims of others. On some such ground as this, probably, it is understood that he was not originally the favorite candidate for the Presidency among the more *zealous* portion of the Unitarian community in this quarter. It is quite possible that this portion have been disappointed, on account of the decided tone of their own public in his favour. But they have, as it seems now to be understood, agreed to acquiesce in the choice of the majority, probably for a very efficient reason which it would be useless for me to name. So be it! If the University must remain in this struggling and somewhat hazardous condition, I do not think a better pilot could be chosen to steer the ship, than the one she now has. With my whole heart I wish him all success in steering her through the breakers; and do sincerely hope, that he will ere long be safe beyond them, and sailing on a quiet sea, with a shining heaven above it.

To bring what I have to say respecting this great question about Cambridge to an end; more must be said and done than has been achieved by excited speeches at the meetings of Overseers, and contests about elections to office, and the like. All

this makes no approach to a radical cure of the evil. *Justice* must be done; *right* must be regarded—*practically* regarded. I have read the Pamphlet or Speech of the late President of Cambridge College, in which he has laboured to show, that the College was, while under him, in its true position as a *State* Institution; and this, because forsooth the Unitarians are *no sectarians!* This now, I must confess, is one of the last reasons I should have expected from a man of sense. No *sectarians!!* What then are Unitarians doing in Boston; and what in the Canton of Vaud, and at Geneva? Yea, might I not ask: What has he himself been doing? The Orthodox, so far as I know, have in general the feeling, that with not a little of professed impartiality and neutrality, there has been scarcely a man in the Commonwealth, who entertained a feeling nearer to that of scorn for them, than this same gentlemen, so opposed to all sects. Sed—de functis officio, *nil.*

I appeal to the honest and generous minded men of all parties, and specially among the Unitarians, and ask: Whether it is not better to put an end to this fruitless and exciting struggle, before matters have gone too far to let the voice of reason and moderation be heard? I do know, that the Orthodox as a body have a deep sensation that *might* is made to stand in the place of *right*, in this matter. I know well that they cannot be satisfied with such logic as Mr. Quincy's; and that they deem it passing strange, that so many men of wealth and generosity and enlightened views as to most other matters, should think of appropriating the Hollis' Fund, and other ancient funds, as the Unitarians have done. The *money* is not worth a moment's concern; but as to the *principle* concerned—I do truly wonder how conscience can be kept quiet in this matter. Still to persist in the *exclusive* course of Cambridge (for forty years past) will be certain to bring on at last a serious struggle. The Orthodox have a large majority in the State; and if the trial of strength in this way must be forced upon them, it is my full persuasion that they will be ready ere long to stand up in their places. But I dread such a contest. What if they should be victorious, and having control of the Legislature should proceed, as their opponents have practically done, to make the University a party one? How easy to make a *test*, that would man the Institution through and through with Orthodoxy. Nothing in our laws could hinder such a proceeding. What I fear is, that they may yet be goaded to such a measure, by the doings of Unitarians. I should rue the day when this might take place; for then the Orthodox

would be doing just what is virtually now done by their opponents. And then, the peace of the State; the prosperity of its literature; the well being of education; what is to become of all these great interests in such a struggle? It will be well for those, who plume themselves on dexterity of management, to keep these things steadily in view. One thing, I believe with entire conviction, they may count upon. There are those—and many are they too—who will never settle down into a tame acquiescence, that *might* shall stand for *right*. We live in a State that threw the British tea overboard; proclaimed true national liberty in Faneuil Hall; fought the battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill; and led the van in the glorious achievement of national independence. How can it be expected that we are always to sit down quiet and inactive spectators, when some of our most sacred privileges are, as we fully believe, infringed upon?

With a trembling hand and an aching heart I have penned these paragraphs. On calm review I cannot recall them. I do know that they speak the feelings of scores of thousands; and imperfectly as I have done the duty of giving these feelings a voice, I hope I shall not be taxed with exceeding the proper bounds of a freeman, a Protestant, and a follower of the Pilgrims.

If my feeble voice, moreover, might reach the venerable Halls of Justice, I should venture to say a word even there. I have an almost excessive regard for our high Courts of Justice, and believe them to be the very life guard in the temple of liberty. It may be, that this is the result, in part, of my earlier studies, which would have led me to frequent them; and which at all events have filled me with enthusiasm for the noble science of Jurisprudence. But I think every reflecting reader, who attentively peruses the history of England, must come to feel that her *Judiciary* has been the bulwark, and the rampart, and the high tower, of English liberty, and of the permanence of all her civic institutions. And so it is with us. Liberty—right—lives or dies with our Courts. Put a Jeffries of former days upon our Supreme Tribunal, and what will be the result? The question needs no answer.

It is my full persuasion, that our Judges do in effect make twenty practical laws in reality, where our Legislators make one. So it must be; and so, I am ready to say, *it should be*. They must have more skill, than the unpractised; and they have as little motive to do wrong, as any body of men on earth.

But I must now come to a more unwelcome part of my task. I have read with attention, and with no little interest the decision

of Chief Justice Parsons in the case of Burr vs. the Inhabitants of Sandwich, (Mass. Reports IX. p. 277 seq.); of Chief Justice Parker, in the case of Baker et Al. vs. Fales, (Mass. Rep. XVI. p. 488 seq.); of Chief Justice Shaw, in the case of Stebbins vs. Jennings, (Pick. Rep. X. p. 172 seq.); all having one general bearing, and all settling down on the principle, that *a Christian church among us has no political existence*, except as connected with a *parish*, and no rights which she can claim or enforce, to property or anything else of appreciable value, when the majority of a parish are against her, and separate from her. All this too, notwithstanding an express Statute, which, long ago, made the deacons of a church a *corporate body* so far as it concerns the holding and claiming of church property. The last of these Judges has argued the case, as it strikes my mind, by far the most ably; and if he has not justified his decision under our laws as they are, (which I fully believe not to be the case), he has come nearer to it than any of his predecessors.

How stands this matter now, in our Commonwealth? Every church to which property has been given, can any day be stripped of it all, by a vote of a majority of a parish to form another church establishment, or even another ecclesiastical society. Such has been the case; and such will again be the case, in oft repeated instances.

How singularly all this strikes one who has just been reading the history of the *Pilgrims*, and finds that for half a century or more after our State was settled, no man could even enjoy the privileges of a *freeman*, who was not a member of a church! Church and parish were identical. Now, the church depends, it seems, on the will of a majority who are *not* members of it, in any particular place, for the rights, or at any rate for a part of the rights, of freemen. It has indeed no LEGAL rights as a church, except in and through a parish. What a change! As great as that from high Orthodoxy to low Unitarianism. *Tempora mutantur; et nos—mutamur in illis!* Never was this more strikingly verrified. Our Republic began in the *spirit*; it is ending in the *flesh*.

It is impossible for any reflecting man to read history, from the first settlement of this Commonwealth down to the present period, without emotions of surprise, if not of regret. No country on earth was ever settled by such a band of men, as first sought these shores in order to find a refuge from the oppression of the mother-country. There the all engrossing theme was, the *established* religion—the *established* religion—the *established*

religion; the exact counterpart of "the temple of the Lord— the temple of the Lord— the temple of the Lord are these," in Jer. 7: 4. Of course a man was deemed a secret rebel, who did not conform to the *established* religion, and finally was thrust into pillories and jails, and abridged of some of his highly important civil and social rights, for non-conformity. The Pilgrim Band could not—would not—brook this. They sought an asylum from the oppression and contumacy of their rulers, spiritual and temporal, on the shores of a new world, so distant that they indulged the hope, that "rumour of oppression and deceit would never reach them more." Here they established a government which has grown up, and become consolidated, and has comprised, and still comprises, a body of men, such as all the world besides is unable to exceed, if they can anywhere equal them, as to intellectual, civil, and social acquisitions and privileges. These are facts which no well-informed considerate man will venture to deny. Every legislative speech, every public oration, every harangue in Fanueil Hall, admits and boasts of all this; and *Unitarians* as much as others. '*Our fathers* did this; and *our fathers* did that;' and by their immortal wisdom and sagacity, and their lofty spirit of freedom, they erected the goodly structure in which their posterity meet to eulogize them, and to exhort one another to walk in their steps, and to copy their example.

Here now is one of the most singular things ever recorded by the faithful Muse of history. What sort of men were they, then, who achieved all these wonderful deeds, worthy of eulogy until time shall be no more? The very class of men, whom Dr. Channing, and his admirers, and indeed many Unitarians of all grades, proclaim to be worshippers of a God who has the attributes of a devil; to be credulous, superstitious, and given to "old wives' fables;" to be zealous for doctrines "which fall far below most of the heathen systems of religion;" to aim at cramping and subjugating all freedom of investigation, reasoning, or opinion, in matters of religion; and to be bent upon fastening on the necks of the community a yoke more galling than that of the Inquisition itself. For surely, if all these things are said of the present generation of the Orthodox, (and no one will dare deny that they are), then they are affirmed *a fortiori* of our fathers, who went much further in giving *legal* protection to the churches than we, and were much farther than we now are, from the true line of entire Christian liberty. But how comes it about that these "devil-worshippers," and "bigots," and "fol-

lowers in the train of St. Dominic," erected such a glorious temple to Liberty, lofty as the heavens, and wide as the domain of the Commonwealth? How came the most perfect Republic on the face of the whole earth, from the hands of such men as these? If any Unitarian, who reëchoes the reproachful words of Dr. Channing and his disciples, will solve me this enigma, I promise him more fame than Oedipus ever acquired by solving the riddle of the Theban Sphinx. It is out of all question. The Unitarian Orators who blazon the virtues and good deeds and glorious achievements of our Pilgrim fathers, feel obliged to throw off the shackles which men of Dr. Channing's stamp would impose upon them—not to say (which would be somewhat indecorous) give the lie to all accusations of that nature. Since the world was created, a higher, nobler race of true LIBERTY-MEN never lived upon it than CALVINISTS.

Where (in the language of one of our most potent orators) was "the first considerable Church established in modern times, without a *bishop*, and State without a *king*?" Was it not at Geneva, and under the auspices of Calvin? That little Republic, built up by his wisdom, and consolidated by his discretion and true love of liberty, has stood amidst the wrecks of kingdoms around it, respected by all the world, and the abode of freedom, until Unitarians forced the government of it to be put into their hands; and since that time, it has become the abode of oppression and violence.

Who does not know, that the English exiles learned at Geneva their notions of true religious liberty, which they carried home from thence, and which in the end dethroned the hypocritical and domineering Charles I., and breathed the air of freedom over the whole kingdom, from John o' Groats' to the Land's End? At this eventful period, our Republic sprang into existence. The *Liberty-men* in question were its founders. A noble building did they erect. If the Corinthian and the Composite did not pervade its original architecture, it exhibited, and still exhibits, in its grandeur and massive strength, the Doric and the Palmleaf column. Who dares to rail at these men, now, *among us*? I was ready to say: Not even a dog moves his tongue. But no; I find that I must recall this. There is at least one man, once I believe a minister of the Gospel in this State, (whether a native I know not), who has published even a volume to show, that the *Pilgrim Fathers* were actually all which Dr. Channing has so recently affirmed us to be. I understand, however, that he is on his journey to *St. Peter's* and

in a fair way for a rapid and prosperous voyage thither. There too he will meet with those choice spirits, which in England have taken up the cowl that Ignatius Loyala bequeathed to all *St. Peter's Elect*—with Newman, and Ward, and a host of Oxford compeers—with others too of our own country, whose insignificance protects them from all exposure to the public. In that joyful throng, which are so soon to meet under that *cracked dome*, which is the wonder (if not the terror) of the world, they will doubtless raise their voices so high, as to fill the vaulted ceiling with the notes of a *Te Deum* for their wonderful deliverence from the bondage (not merely or principally of sin and Satan, but) of Calvinism and Orthodoxy, and their restoration to the glorious liberty of kissing the toe of St. Peter's successor, or at any rate, if they should fail of this, of kissing the toe of that statue, which was once the image of Jupiter Olympius in a heathen temple, but is now *converted* by baptismal water into a true and exact representation of Peter himself. All hail! to these choicest of the elect of the Vicar of God and St. Dominic! May they live a thousand and one years, and their *shadows* never be less! Live, I would say, in a *monastery* of their own—separate forever from the sacred soil of Liberty and of Orthodoxy!

But to return; nearly all political orators have too much tact to make open and public assaults upon the Pilgrims. Some of our pulpit orators and pamphlet and review-writers, have less of discretion and magnanimity. The names, indeed, of those venerated fathers are rarely called out in the way of reproach. The art of sagacious management consists, in throwing contumely and contempt over all that was distinctive in their religious opinions, without being suspected of such a design. It is only in this way that the descendants of the Pilgrims can be misled.

I make the challenge, then, openly and fearlessly, to all who tread under foot the religious Creed of our fathers—the challenge to show the consistency of what they affirm of *all* Orthodoxy, and of orthodox men as bigots, and unrelenting superstitious zealots, and advocates of religious oppression, and enemies to all freedom of inquiry and free religious action, with the high encomiums which they feel obliged to bestow on the civil and social institutions of the very men in question. There is no way of meeting this challenge. FACTS—facts that are before the whole world—contradict all which they affirm of the tendencies of Orthodoxy to suppress civil, social, or religious liberty. FACTS TESTIFY THAT THIS ACCUSATION IS NOT TRUE.

If now such matters are not to be decided by *experience*, by *facts*, in what way is any question of a practical nature ever to be decided? I do insist upon a reasonable answer to this question, from all thinking and sober men.

But I have lost myself in turning aside to pay my heart-felt homage to the Puritan Pilgrims. I must now resume the consideration of our present reception in the Halls of Justice within our State.

I certainly do not and cannot believe, that our forefathers acted wisely in that particular of their new government, which had respect to the rights of a freeman. But I can easily see that they are pardonable for the mistake, on the ground of the vexations and oppressions which ungodly civil rulers, the legal heads of churches in England, had inflicted upon them. They meant to foreclose the civil power, for the future, against oppression and abuse. But how is it with their descendants of the sixth and seventh generation? The church has no rights now, except as leaning upon and connected with the *parish*. It is a body unknown to the law, and unrecognized by it, except as a mere appendage to those who are not the church. Truly, I may say again, a revolution as great in our civil rights as in our theology!

If now the "glorious uncertainty of the law" can throw its ample shield before our Judges, and protect them from any other accusation at the most than that of mere error in a legal opinion, (and even from this, in the view of Unitarians), still, I have a deep seated conviction that Unitarianism has unconsciously operated on the minds of these same Jurisconsults, and given unconsciously a hue to their thoughts and reasonings on this subject. It is indeed no small matter to *disfranchise* Christian churches, and make them virtual outlaws, and dependent for their property and their sacred utensils on the will of a parish. One simple principle seems to me to be enough to settle this whole matter, in the mind of any plain unsophisticated reasoner. This is, that a lawful gift to a man, or to any body of men recognized and approved as such by the laws of the State, is *bona fide* their property, and their's forever. It may indeed be wrenched from them by some hair-splitting chicanery of legal ratiocination; but the simple and eternal principles of *justice* decide the matter beyond appeal. I make no accusations of *intention* to do wrong, on the part of those distinguished Judges. I do not believe they were conscious of any such design. But it is impossible for me to believe, that the *lawful* intention of donors to churches

has not been substantially frustrated by the decisions of our Courts; and therefore I must think that it is a just matter for *legislative interference*. Even if we fully concede, that the decisions in question can be *technically* justified, in the eye of our present laws, my convictions would not be changed in the least. It is one of those very plain cases, where I should spontaneously say: *Summum jus, summa injuria.*

Why should it be a matter of wonder, then, that the Orthodox are dissatisfied with what they seriously regard as an injurious infringement upon their rights? Nay, I might boldly venture to ask a different question: Do they not deserve great credit for patience and longanimity and aversion to tumult and disorder, since they have waited in quiet for redress so long—and I fear that I must add, with so little prospect of obtaining it?

Yet, after all, I cannot help hoping, that when the excitement which attends the commencement of disputes shall have passed away, Unitarians will return to the feeling, that the denial of just claims to the larger portion of the community, whether under the specious cover of law or in any other way, is not the best method even of spreading or of establishing their own religious views. A generosity of feeling will yet, as I am inclined to think, obtain the upper hand. There is surely a large class of men among them, who would look on oppression and injustice, in almost any other form, with scorn and indignation. What we ask of them is, to reflect soberly on the wrongs of which we complain. We have no wish, even if it were entirely within our power, to abridge them of their right to propagate their own views, or to establish Universities, Theological Seminaries, Academies, Schools, and Churches, when and where they please. We have no desire to appropriate their funds to our use. They stand in no need of appropriating ours to their use. Above all—to seize upon the little property or the sacramental utensils of a country church, and to force the Supreme Court to become an instrument in such an act of spoliation—really looks so undignified, so grasping, so oppressive, that I must confess it fills me with unqualified astonishment. It needs no second sight to predict, that in the Bay State such proceedings will not be likely to open the way to popular favour and success. The suppressed sense of injury, which all thinking men entertain with whom my religious views associate me, forbodes some future efforts in earnest to secure their religious rights and liberties, unless the hand of oppression is lightened. Most sincerely do I hope that the time may never come, when such efforts must be made.

The lofty position which Massachusetts has always taken, and still takes, in the cause of civil and social liberty, renders all the proceedings, which it has been my painful task to describe, the more strange. Who will ever believe hereafter, that Unitarianism is not a *sectarian* religion? What has it not done here, in leading such enlightened men, worthy in other respects of all estimation and honour, to measures so inconsistent with the professions and the character of this free republic? What has it not done at Geneva? What is it not doing in the Canton of Vaud? No; while Dr. Channing and his friends and followers pour out the vials of their indignation upon a large portion of their fellow citizens, and reproach them with the superstitions of the dark ages, and attempts to bind the consciences of men in the chains of an Inquisition, and the like, we need no delay to make the reply: *Mutato nomine, de te fabula narratur.* You are the men who oppress, by denying to others their just and lawful rights, and in seeking a refuge from the consequences of this, by interposing the broad shield of legal technicalities. But Δίκη, (the Guardian Spirit of Justice), if we may hearken to the assurances of Aeschylus, though slow of foot, is sure of progress. She will come at last, and speak in language that the very deaf shall hear.

END.

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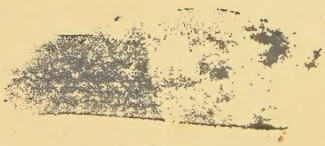

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